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# The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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## Economics and Art

WE have heard much of "pure" poetry and "intellectual" poetry in the last few years, —why not "pure" fiction and intellectualism in the novel? The reply is that of course we have had them, and for a very good reason. The novels of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson, and of Henry James before all of them, represent the capture of fiction by the sophisticated intellect absorbed in the give and take of analysis. In these books the umbilical cord which joins them to a given locale is often atrophied. Who cares, except Irishmen, that "Ulysses" is a tale of Dublin! As for the "pure" novel, what else are the later stories of Willa Cather, or the fantasies of David Garnett and Robert Nathan and Thornton Wilder? The attempt has been to escape from plot, from strictly contemporary reference, from the warp of an imagination too much influenced by the pull of immediate environment. "Death Comes for the Archbishop" is more than historic chronicle, yet it perfects its chrysolite of the imagination by a conscious choice of a different culture from ours. Even so George Moore argued that "pure" poetry should divest itself of ideas or description which might entangle it in the fabric of merely current thinking.

Such choices, especially when made by artists of real power and originality, are not haphazard. They must be reactions from some strong impulsion prejudicial either to the art of those writers or to art in general. And how evident it is, once the mind begins to run in this direction, that an obsession does exist. We are all caught by it, all swung away by it from our old curves of thinking. For this is the age of economics.

Not economics by any exact, scientific definition. The shift in attention is much more subtle than that. For while the means of a livelihood have always been a theme for literature it is only since the war that the economic interpretation of history (which means the effect upon every aspect of life, from religion to war, of the organization of agriculture, industry, and trade) has entered everyone's consciousness and become therefore such a dominating emotion as were political rights in the last century.

This is to state the obvious, but it is not so obvious that a whole generation of writers, especially in fiction, has been carried away by this obsession, their interests shifted, their ideas colored, their subjects determined, their detachment as artists from the scene they were describing for us markedly lessened.

It is interesting to note at this point that the Soviet authorities are said to be much dissatisfied with the novels being written with the class struggle as a basis. Dreiser does not please them, Dos Passos is admonished to keep the only true interpretation of society in mind, their own novelists are criticized because with such a magnificent theme they do not shake down the reputations of Dostoievsky and Tolstoy. They recognize the obsession which has made so many of the considerable novels of our period tracts in the emotional interpretation of economics, without understanding the true reason for the artist's obsession with themes which seem to them the only important ones. They classify fiction as good communism or bad, which is like classing novels as good because they are democratic or bad

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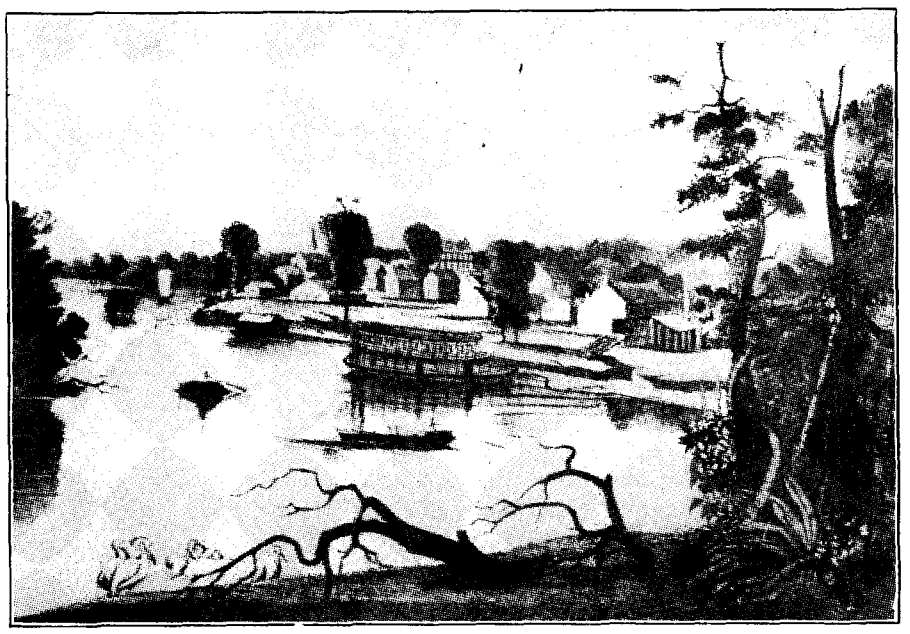

ENGRAVING BY HENRY LEWIS FROM "DAS ILLUSTRIERTE MISSISSIPPITHAL."
Courtesy the Macaulay Co.

## Prophet, Pedant and Pioneer*

By LEWIS MUMFORD

THE new and revised edition of Mr. Van Wyck Brooks's study of Mark Twain comes at the right moment. Within the last year Mr. Brooks's biographical method, his interpretation of Mark Twain, and his picture of the pioneer have all been called into question by Mr. Bernard De Voto, the author of "Mark Twain's America." Since many people will read Mr. Brooks's critics without having read "The Ordeal of Mark Twain" itself, and since Mr. De Voto has done something less than justice to Mr. Brooks in his citation from his work, it is good to have "The Ordeal" itself, now a dozen years old, plainly before us.

The first point to get clear about "The Ordeal of Mark Twain" is that it is not a full-length biography or a literary criticism but a study in character. What was Mr. Brooks's problem? He posed it in the first chapter. Here is a writer of magnetic personality and every appearance of exceptional ability, a man whose mind is clear and steady and sharp, a man of nobler stature than most of the people around him: one of those men of letters who seem born, like Hugo or Tolstoy, to be leaders of the race.

When one examines Mark Twain's work as a writer what does one find? One finds two juicy books about boys' life, the better of which, the immortal "Huckleberry Finn," is weakened by a tawdry and preposterous conclusion; one finds a satire about life in the "Court of King Arthur," written from a standpoint scarcely to be differentiated from the "Connecticut Yankee" who is the hero of the tale; one finds the first few chapters of the book about "Life on the Mississippi," and beyond these items a succession of essays, stories, travel books, most of them of third or fourth rank, saved from immediate oblivion by the aroma of the author's personality.

Not merely as a writer but as a man Mark Twain seems a small, spoiled effigy of the person he might have been. He hates the shams and hypocrisies of our society, but when he attacks them he usually pulls his punches: he dislikes the tame conventions of his Victorian contemporaries, but when he challenges them, he does so in secret, like a little boy writing a dirty word on the back of a fence. He has the nation, almost the world, at his feet; but he accepts none of the intellectual and moral responsibilities of this situation. Holding the desires and standards of his public sacred, he is content merely to tickle the ribs of his contemporaries. His standards of personal success are precisely those of a miner in Nevada or a business man in Wall Street. Finally, this humorist, who has ridden from one literary triumph to another, ends his life on a note of black and bitter despair.

Whatever one may say of such a man, he is surely not a simple character, and the mood of psychological innocence in which his official biographer approached him left much to be plumbed. Mr. Van Wyck Brooks set out to study the elements in Mark Twain's background and in his personal relations and choices that helped create this baffling mixture of achievement and ineptitude, grandeur and crassness, humanity and vulgarity, humor and stupid buffoonery that was Mark Twain. It was an unexplored territory. Before Mr. Brooks entered it Mark Twain had been enlarged into a myth without being appraised as a man.

Mr. Bernard De Voto has taken exception to Mr. Brooks's study on three grounds. First: there is no problem. Second: the psychological method employed by Mr. Brooks is too dangerous, his application of it is slippery, and the interpretation he arrives at is unimportant. Third: Mr. Brooks knows nothing whatever about Mark Twain's America, and particularly about the pioneer life of the frontier.

Let us dismiss the first ground. Mr. De Voto, who accepts his hero naïvely, merely means that there is no problem for him.

As for the second, I admit the dangers. Human character is a complex and thorny subject for any kind of analysis, and only those who have a special flair for it should risk their necks in treating it. No life is more than half explicable, even to him who lives it and reflects upon it, and although psychological observation is doubtless one of the oldest amusements of

(*Continued on next page*)

*The Ordeal of Mark Twain. By VAN WYCK BROOKS. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1933. $3.75.

## Yankee Yeomanry

AS THE EARTH TURNS. By GLADYS HASTY CARROLL. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1933. $2.50.

Reviewed by DONALD DAVIDSON

ALTHOUGH I have never lived on a Maine farm like that described in Miss Carroll's excellent novel, I know the people of whom she writes. They belong to that old republic of independent farmers whom Thomas Jefferson considered the foundation of democracy. In these Maine folk, so unaffectedly depicted, appear again the indubitable Yankees, cousins of the yeomanry of Piedmont and Prairie. It is good to see their ruddy features emerge through the socialistic pallor of our times. They were said to be lost; now that by such amazing grace they are found, I am led into retrospect.

When I went to school in Tennessee a good many years ago, Southern boys were studying "Snowbound" in ninety degree temperatures and declaiming "The Barefoot Boy" along with "The Conquered Banner" on Friday afternoons. Even among us Confederates, the New England rural tradition was something to learn by heart, like the battles of Lee or the English kings. Later on it was disconcerting to be told, in books fresh from New York, that New England farm life was wholly evil where it was not extinct. In fact, all country folks had turned into yokels, to whom our novelists were recommending liberalism and tonsillectomy. Yet how strange that country people were yokels only in the United States; in Hamsun's Norway or Yeats's Ireland they were very engaging persons. And what was one to do with Robert Frost, who persisted in liking the New England countryside, although he made up dark sayings to the effect that "One had to be versed in country things, Not to believe the phoebes wept."

I take Miss Carroll's novel as a powerful sign that the wheel has gone around. Country folks looked like yokels only so long as city people behaved like cockneys (to borrow Mr. Canby's phrase in "American Estimates"). From the tedious urban uniformity of America the Menace, we are returning to a rural and sectional diversity that was there all the time. The earth is good, not only in Pearl Buck's China or in the agrarian Mexico to which

## This Week

ANDANTE.
By KATHARINE SHEPARD HAYDEN.

MORAL MAN AND IMMORAL SOCIETY.
Reviewed by ALEXANDER GOLDENWEISER.

DAVID HUME.
Reviewed by W. R. DENNES.

E. H. HARRIMAN.
Reviewed by JOHN CHAMBERLAIN.

NOTES WITH A YELLOW PEN. II.
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

"CARAVAN CITIES."
Reviewed by ARTHUR DARBY NOCK.

"THE BIRDS OF MINNESOTA."
Reviewed by SAMUEL SCOVILLE, JR.

## Next Week, or Later

"THE MODERN CORPORATION AND PRIVATE PROPERTY."
Reviewed by HENRY BRUERE.

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Stuart Chase made a cockney pilgrimage, but right here.

Miss Carroll does not react to the extreme of converting the Maine farm people into Noble Savages. In general, they are unreconstructed Yankees, but they have a high degree of individual particularity. With admirable completeness she puts a number of individuals before us, and through them conveys the temper of life of a Maine family from one winter to the next. Their triumphs are modest—a good harvest, a fortunate marriage, the little success of this son or that daughter; and their sorrows are in the course of nature. I have not read many novels in which background and human character are so well fused, without extravagance in either direction. This balance comes ne-

GLADYS HASTY CARROLL.

cessarily from an intimate understanding of what a Maine farm is like. The temper of this life is happy; its satisfactions and disappointments are not dissociated from the day's work and the detail of surroundings. Thus the novel becomes a genuine
oral, which neither idealizes nor pro-
, but simply gives its pleasant Maine
ion of "the mean and sure estate."

ıe dominating figure is the girl Jen, a nineteen-year-old Ceres who is cook, housekeeper, and mother-confessor to the Shaw household. Jen flinches at nothing; she takes life easy, but diligently. To her kitchen, where all is shipshape and comfortable, the family come for sustenance, physical and spiritual: the stepmother, with her old woman's miseries; the younger children, with their school talk; the brothers and sisters and stepsisters and "in-laws." Jen knows how to manage them just as she knows how to get a dinner on the table hot. Jen knows why the nature of Lois May pulls her toward the city, and why bookish Olly had better go to college than farm; and what is to be done between ne'er-do-well George and his distracted wife; and how to manage Ed's wedding; and what is needful for tight-lipped father Shaw, who likes to have his children around but will never "hold them back." Better than anyone else in the family, Jen fulfils her father's wish for an ideal son: "One who would listen, not too smart nor too impatient nor too proud to learn what his land could teach him as the earth turned slowly round the sun." At the end, Jen's acceptance of the wooing of Stan Janowski, the young Polish farmer who has moved into the sparsely settled neighborhood with his fiddle music and his open ways, seems part of her tolerant accommodation to the realities of earth and of a life that must go on where it knows it belongs.

"As the Earth Turns" has much of the good temper, but less of the lyrical romantic strain than appears in Elizabeth Madox Roberts's Kentucky novels. And her canvas is less ambitious, her scenes are more intimate and domestic than in Willa Cather's works. But she is evidently capable of doing for Maine what such writers have done for regions elsewhere, and in a way so substantial and winning that it cannot be but welcome.

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Franz Seldte, the author of a war novel published in English under the title of "Through a Lens Darkly," is the new Labor Minister in Hitler's Cabinet.

# *Prophet, Pedant, Pioneer*

(*Continued from preceding page*)

the race, progress in the technique of analysis will probably not remove the risks attendant on it. Those who, like Mr. De Voto, had rather be safe than sorry may very well let psychological interpretation alone. When they deny the method to others, however, they are smugly attempting to make their own temperament a final criterion.

At the time Mr. Brooks made his exploration of Mark Twain's character, the psychological method had not been pushed very far in American biography; Mr. Brooks was one of the pioneers in its use. With all his praise of the frontier, Mr. De Voto unfortunately understands the ardors of pioneering only on the plane of the practical life; in intellectual matters he prefers to stay close to the Old Homestead. But the point to remember is that although Mr. Brooks used the convenient vocabulary of the psychoanalyst, his interpretation dealt with phenomena known to all acute students of human nature from Shakespeare to Stendhal; and the real question is, not whether Mr. Brooks's insights and intuitions have a precise scientific basis, but whether they had a valid outcome in understanding.

The question, so far as I am concerned, admits of only one answer: Mr. Brooks made a necessary, painful but necessary, contribution to our understanding both of Mark Twain and ourselves, in so far as we are the products of a similar environment, in so far as we are confronted by similar dilemmas. He himself in his new edition has altered the color and emphasis on certain parts of the picture; but in the main no biographer of Mark Twain who wishes to go beneath the surface can escape his debt to Mr. Brooks. Mr. De Voto has evaded this debt by holding, with massive iteration, that no one should seek to go beneath the surface.

This theory seems to me a puerile one. A biography without psychological interpretation is not a biography at all; for the data of biography, the facts themselves, are one thing, and their arrangement, their relationship, the meaning, though closely dependent on the data, are another matter. To say, as Mr. De Voto recently did in an article in *Harper's*, that the facts are all-important and that a sound biography must contain nothing else is to say that a scarecrow, if it be dressed carefully enough, will serve instead of a man. The truth is one can assemble a thousand facts about a person's existence, all of them verifiable, and create a monstrosity that corresponds to no being that ever lived; while on the other hand, one can have access to half the number of facts, and even err about particular ones, and still present an essentially truthful portrait. The pedant wants to be sure that the facts are right, even if they mean nothing; the genuine biographer wants, above all, to be sure that the interpretation is just and accurate, even should the facts be insufficient.

In general, Mr. De Voto's suspicion of interpretation and generalization of any kind is quite understandable. When he attempts them himself he is almost as reckless, as dogmatic, and as inaccurate as when he is dealing controversially with a personality or a theory he dislikes. But Mr. De Voto hides his weakness from the casual reader by using the word "facts" to describe his own particular kind of interpretation. Shall I uncharitably offer a few concrete examples? Consider Mr. De Voto's interpretation of the pioneer's westward march. Putting aside all past explanations, he attributes it to a new phenomenon in history: "God's gadfly," he says, "had stung us mad." In describing Mark Twain's America he can say on page 65: "The slaves were happy, the happiest folk in that contented countryside," while he sums up this happiness only eleven pages later, in these words: "The slave's world was dominated by the terror of death. . . . It was a world that stank of death and shuddered with its terror." (It must have been a very contented countryside indeed.)

In still another place, in order to support the notion that all the spiritual weaknesses that have been attributed to the pioneer can be accounted for in terms of hookworm and malaria, Mr. De Voto observes that "a clinical thermometer would have shown about one degree of fever. This was the constant temperature of the population." How did Mr. De Voto, one wonders, achieve this admirably exact observation—by systematic inclusion, by sampling, by questionnaire, by clairvoyance? Does it also explain the pioneer mores in the people of the Mohawk Valley—and in those who wore shoes against the hookworm and did not succumb to malaria? Was it due to anopheles and the hookworm alone — or perhaps to God's gadfly? One grants the existence of the diseases: I merely quarrel with Mr. De Voto's imaginative distribution of them, backed by a hypothetical clinical thermometer. Mr. De Voto's excellent descriptions of frontier life are not ruined for me by the fact that he occasionally commits howlers like these; but they would be if I accepted his principles.

FROM "LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI."

This brings us to the validity of Mr. Brooks's knowledge of the frontier, as opposed to Mr. De Voto's. Mr. Brooks said in effect that the pioneer lived in a barbarous and inadequate environment, which lacked the materials necessary for complete human development, and which even curbed and crippled humane reactions which did not serve the rough life of the frontier. Success in this society was described in material terms, though not everyone attained it; and the canons of success on the frontier, linked up with those of the new industrialism in the East, automatically discouraged those who had more civilized objectives. Mr. De Voto handsomely refutes Mr. Brooks by setting forth the following facts:

First: the remains of the English ballads were still sung in various parts of the West, although, he is honest enough to point out there is no evidence in Mark Twain's works that he had heard them, had remembered them, or had been influenced by them, as he was by the Negro spirituals. Second: asking on page 55, "Is the frontier distinguished for squalor, unimaginable lethargy, filth, repellent social relations, a hideousness of wretched life, the degradation of mankind to a larval form that burrowed protectively into the clay?" He answers: "Unquestionably . . . in part." Third: the frontier was not Calvinist, since it had sports like cock-fighting and jolly barn dances; but the prevailing religion was the religion of the day, namely, Calvinism. Fourth: the notion that frontier life was detestable is an empty literary theory (for counter evidence see De Voto, above) but marauding ruffians hunted river and forest and Mark Twain as a boy, saw various deaths by violence, or the corpses left behind, and through companionship with the Negro he came under the spell of the slave's world and the slave's religion, dominated by superstition and the terror of death. Finally, the notion that this was a materialistic and acquisitive society, with little in its morals or interests to counterbalance the overwhelming preoccupation with getting a bare living or money-making, is disproved by the existence of travelling theatrical companies, whores in mining camps, and slave songs.

In short, Mr. De Voto "corrects" Mr. Brooks in a book that in itself generously contains enough data to support every item in Mr. Bro
ter
cor
put
De Voto is an excellent revolver shot; but if his marksmanship were not better than his disproofs of Mr. Brooks's interpretation of the pioneer he would, under the happy impression that he had hit the bull's eye, have long ago committed suicide.

Now, a considerable amount of searching since "The Ordeal of Mark Twain" was written, has brought to light customs, habits, verses, sayings, stories, which give the historical observer a richer sense of the underlying actuality than he would get by a simple reading of the later frontier writers like Bret Harte and Mark Twain. But Mr. De Voto's notion that his own work in this department gives him any peculiar superiority over Mr. Brooks is mere bounce. For the fact is that nothing that has been brought to the surface materially alters the outlines of the picture: with all his delving, Mr. De Voto is pretty well satisfied with Mark Twain's own description of the West, nor has he shown reason to doubt the descriptions and judgments of other first hand observers.

When Mr. De Voto revolts at Mr. Brooks's description of the West as a desert of human sand and comes pretty close to saying that it was little less than a paradise, he simply proves that the ancient habits of the pioneer are still with us. Was it not with the same straight face and the same fervor of conviction that Mister Scadder pointed to a swamp and tried to convince Martin Chuzzlewit that it was the fine metropolis of New Eden? And when Mr. De Voto describes in detail the "exuberant vitality" or the "robust life" of the West, far from undermining Mr. Brooks's estimate, he sharply confirms it: for the life he pictures with such fidelity is life at a rudimentary animal level, a life that does not rise more than fitfully above the latitude of the spinal column.

The point is that Mr. Brooks is a realist

## *Andante*

By KATHARINE SHEPARD HAYDEN

IS it not strange that of our days of peace
I do not write a line? The stinging pain
Of our white rages hurries to release
In words poured on you like the furious rain
Loosed from a tempest sky. But our dear hours
Lie in me like the captured scent of June
When the wild honeysuckle turns its flowers,
Myriads of them, to the summer moon!
I would not break upon night's stillness then
Except with music. So it is with love—
All my flowing words are halted when
I draw within its aura, and I move
In a soft, shining silence through the fair
And spacious peace of that enchanted air!

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when he faces the frontier, whereas Mr. De Voto romanticizes about that pioneer life, in the way that people committed to sedentary occupations so often do: he has, in fact, a sort of spinster's adoration for the tough he-men who were Mark Twain's contemporaries. "American literature," explains Mr. De Voto with a condescending eye upon his fellow writers, "American literature contains so very few books by men who have experienced an emotion so violent as the impulse to kill." But the impulse itself is not uncommon: it is essentially the mark of an infantile mind to seek to overcome a human difficulty by killing the person who embodies it.

The society that Mr. De Voto has described with so much sympathetic rapture and so little understanding, was essentially, on his own showing, an infantile society, infantile in its homicidal impulses, infantile in its mental development, infantile in its humor with its overemphasis of copulation and excretion, infantile, in fact, in most of its tastes and interests and preferences. It is not an accident that the man who embodied this society most completely, according to Mr. De Voto, should have been at his best in writing books about boys. Roughly two generations after Mark Twain's experiences, Mr. De Voto recapitulates most of the typical weaknesses of the pioneer point of view; and he has so little perspective on his own behavior that he apparently is unaware of the way in which it confirms, in detail, Mr. Brooks's contentions.

About the *facts* of pioneer life Mr. De Voto and Mr. Brooks are, then, in substantial agreement; the slight discrepancy in their points of view comes from the fact that what Mr. Brooks calls Hell Mr. De Voto patriotically calls Heaven. Both writers refer Mark Twain's specific characteristics and literary achievement to the frontier; for Mr. De Voto it is the complete and sufficient source of Mark Twain's strength, whereas for Mr. Brooks the frontier was one of the main things that crippled him. And they are both right, only it is amusing to find that Mr. De Voto regards himself as the greater admirer. For where does Mr. De Voto place Mark Twain? He places him simply at the head of that procession of frontier humorists whose tall stories and gallows humor gave a proud edge to their exacerbation and disillusion. "It is not only," says Mr. De Voto, "that Mark Twain never became anything but a humorist, realist, and satirist of the frontier; he never desired to be anything else." For Mr. Brooks, on the other hand, Mark Twain is significant not because he surpassed Davy Crockett, but because he just falls short of the level of Cervantes or Rabelais or Voltaire.

Where, then, does "The Ordeal of Mark Twain" stand? It has still, I think, the validity that it had at the beginning: a daring, ground-breaking interpretation of the character, the environment, and the fate of Mark Twain, considered as a typical American writer, passive to his surroundings, and confronted by all the problems and difficulties that still touch men of letters in this country: a country where, as Mark Twain himself said, "by the goodness of God we have three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practise either." Mr. Brooks's portrait undoubtedly needs various corrections and amplifications, for he was dealing mainly with Mark Twain's dilemmas, rather than with his life as a whole. Toward a fuller and more final understanding of Mark Twain's life one needs a biographer with the tact and subtlety and knowledge of the frontier background that Miss Constance Rourke so eminently showed in her "American Humor." But Mr. De Voto, plainly, is the last person capable of taking advantage of Mr. Brooks's labors and passing beyond them. For he is full of naive obsessions, uncriticized defenses, and sentimental yearnings which keep him from thinking clearly about Mark Twain's critics. Gallantly protecting Mark Twain from Mr. Brooks's "devaluation" of his hero, one beholds Mr. De Voto shielding, a little bellicosely, himself. Fortunately for his aplomb, he does not believe in psychological biography; and if he wishes to retain his self-esteem, I counsel him never to abandon that position.

## *The Way to Justice*

MORAL MAN AND IMMORAL SOCIETY. A Study in Ethics and Politics. By REINHOLD NIEBUHR. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1933. $2.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER GOLDENWEISER

BOOKS on morals, as on laughter, seldom escape the fate of being either dull or ridiculous. Niebuhr in his latest study has not only escaped from this dilemma but has succeeded in writing an interesting and stimulating book which fits but loosely into its title. Nor is the sombre and almost cynical note struck in the Introduction fully vindicated by the sequel. "Conflict is inevitable," we read there, "and in this conflict power must be challenged by power. This fact is not recognized by most of the educators, and only very grudgingly admitted by most of the social scientists." This conflict is inevitable, if society is to be changed, because groups are incurably pugnacious and egotistical. What is worse, when a new balance is achieved by the application of power, there is no guarantee that those who will have conquered by power will prove preferable to those they have displaced.

> There is, for instance, as yet no clear proof that the power of economic overloads can be destroyed by means less rigorous than communism has employed; but there is also no proof that communistic oligarchs, once the idealistic passion of a revolutionary period is spent, will be very preferable to the capitalistic oligarchs, whom they are to displace.

A tragic impasse indeed!

But as the author proceeds in page after page of lucid, succinct, and often striking argumentation, the scene brightens somewhat. True, nationalism is hopeless, it seems irretrievably doomed to stupidity, narrow selfishness, and shortsightedness. The class, as a bond of interest and a source of ideals, fares somewhat better. There the author exhibits an unusual degree of sympathy for the visions of the proletariat. "Nothing proves the prejudices of the middle-class world more clearly than its unwillingness to recognize the genuine morality of proletarian aspirations." And yet, what is the guarantee of a real chance for happiness and freedom in society, if men and women remain what they are?

> The expectation of changing human nature by destruction of economic privilege to such a degree that no one will desire to make selfish use of power, must probably be placed in the category of romantic illusions.

This being so, the way of revolution may after all not prove the most desirable way. Some use of force, to be sure, seems essential. And force, at times, means violence. As the author shows, in fact, even passive resistance if vigorously adhered to, results in some violence and not a little suffering. All depends on a sufficient application of reason and moral sense in order to avoid excessive or misdirected violence; also, in order to preclude the danger of personal rancor and the sort of ugliness that arises in the heat of struggle. In the final analysis, then, all depends on the cultivation of rational attitudes and broad moral perspectives.

Mr. Niebuhr's book is in itself a symbol of the times. I cannot, therefore, agree with him when he says:

> In the task of that redemption the most effective agents will be men who have substituted some new illusions for the abandoned ones. The most important of these illusions is that the collective life of mankind can achieve perfect justice.... The illusion is dangerous because it encourages terrible fanaticisms. It must therefore be brought under the control of reason. One can only hope that reason will not destroy it before its work is done.

I think that the illusion of perfect justice is not only dangerous but also unnecessary. We can well afford, I believe, to be realistic in this matter. What counts is not perfect justice—if we had it, we should not know what to do with it—but enthusiastic and rational effort in the direction of greater and ever greater justice. We may well leave to the philosophers the working out of the logical limit of such efforts.

## *A Great Philosopher*

DAVID HUME. By J. Y. T. GREIG. New York: Oxford University Press. 1932. $3.75.

Reviewed by W. R. DENNES

DAVID HUME'S brief autobiography and, more particularly, his letters, are the chief source of our knowledge of the life of the most influential British philosopher. Hitherto the letters have been accessible mainly in the edition of Burton (Edinburgh, 1846), whose rather foolish anxiety "to defend Hume against the awful charge of skepticism" led him, not only to omit

DAVID HUME.

many of the most revealing letters, but also to bowdlerize some of those he did publish. In this volume Professor Greig has collected, and published as a separate work, all of Hume's letters that a diligent search could trace.

Professor Greig espouses the theory that historiography is not science but art; and his own practice in the present work does credit to his theory. Such of his imaginative reconstructions as may fail to convince (though they will not fail to interest) a critical reader, are for the most part those that he has himself labeled "guesses." The most delightful of these is his account of Hume's boyhood, and especially of its religious milieu. Proud of his "Covenanting father, a martyr of 'the killing times,'" George Home (the village minister and David's cousin) inculcated the strictest dogmas of the Scottish kirk, not only in the long "ordinaries" which occupied the greater part of Sabbath afternoons as well as mornings, but also on his frequent visits to David's fatherless house. We had all fallen in Adam; we were all spiritually dead-born, "filthy, noisome, rank, and stinking"; and although a vicarious atonement had been offered in Christ, the power to avail ourselves "of this expiation," as Greig quotes Mathieson, "was to be communicated to only a few of the minority to whom it had been made known; and these were to be saved to show that God was merciful, as the rest were to be damned to show that He was just." At that Judgment, as Greig quotes Thomas Boston, "The godly husband shall say Amen to the damnation of her who lay on his bosom; the godly parents shall say Hallelujah at the passing of the sentence against their only child; the godly child shall approve the damnation of his wicked parents—the father who begat him and the mother who bore him." "And as for God, He will laugh."

There is little doubt that the repulsive ethics and the questionable logic of such religion preoccupied Hume. The preoccupation may have been one of the reasons why he missed altogether the qualities of mystic insight and of devotion which may be valuable parts of religious experience and worship. In any case, it is as a reaction against the ministers and sermons of Hume's boyhood that Greig interprets his later bitter attacks upon the ethics and cosmology and logic of Puritan and Presbyterian "enthusiasm." And Greig supposes that it was the influence of the friendship (and not of the arguments) of the Moderates of the Scottish Kirk (whom, at forty, Hume came to know and like) that mollified his aversion to religion and inclined him to give so tolerant an interpretation of natural theology as he did in his famous "Dialogues." But Greig argues persuasively, and with much new evidence, that the chief motive in Hume's retreat from earlier truculence to a measure of "sham piety," was the desire to avoid giving such offense as would not only make his "Dialogues'" unpublishable in his life-time, but would also expose them to the risk of worse mutilation by editors after his death. Greig admits the vanity, the "desire for notoriety," and the politic discretion, that were factors in Hume's character. Hume himself, writing to Henry Home, described his own "castration" of the "Treatise" by "cutting off its nobler parts" as "a piece of cowardice for which I blame myself, though I believe none of my friends will blame me." But on the whole Greig succeeds in showing that Hume's "discretion" in these and other respects had as little that was time-serving or mean about it, as his frugality had of niggardliness. Above everything else, Hume desired a hearing in his time for the "new medium by which truth might be established": the introduction of "the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects."

No doubt such psychological factors as Greig describes go a long way towards explaining Hume's contradictory opinions on religion, which run all the way from his remark to Boswell "that the morality of every religion was bad; and . . . that when he heard a man was religious, he concluded he was a rascal; though he had known some instances of very good men being religious" to his description of the office of religion "to reform men's lives, to purify their hearts, to enforce all moral duties, and to secure obedience to the laws and civil magistrates." Nevertheless, philosophical readers will continue to feel that Hume needed only to take seriously one of the most fundamental principles of his theory of knowledge in order to be rid of the whole problem of belief or disbelief in a governing Providence. Hume's clear recognition that no arguments from events to their causes can justify us in saying one word about the natures or further effects of such causes—in saying anything beyond the tautology that whatever occurs, then the world must be such as to include that occurrence — Hume's clear recognition of this principle should have made him see once and for all that statements about a transcendent God, inferred from the processes of nature, were not so much either true or false as they were devoid of the significance which they claimed to have. Professor Greig suggests that on points like this the difference be-

## *The Saturday Review Recommends*

**This Group of Current Books:**

AS THE EARTH TURNS. By GLADYS HASTY CARROLL. *Macmillan.*
A novel of the soil.

ALWAYS A GRAND DUKE. By the GRAND DUKE ALEXANDER. *Farrar & Rinehart.*
Further reminiscences of a life of melodramatic contrasts.

ARCTIC VILLAGE. By ROBERT MARSHALL. *Smith & Haas.*
A "Middletown" of the Arctic.

**This Less Recent Book:**

ALEXANDER THE GREAT. By ULRICK WILCKEN. *Dial.*
An authoritative biography, embodying the results of the most recent research.

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tween Kant and Hume is not nearly so great as the Kantians have imagined. As a matter of fact, so far as the Kantian position is a logic of the presuppositions of experience, there is here no real difference between Kant and Hume, for in this respect Kant's accomplishment was *nil*. As is now recognized by competent logicians, events, impressions, or whatever else, experienced in a given order, presuppose nothing beyond their occurrence in that order.

Greig's book is primarily a biography rather than a study of Hume's philosophy. After a brief fiasco in commerce at Bristol, Hume visited Paris; and then, in a year spent at Reims and about two years at La Fleche—a period of astonishing intellectual activity on which Greig is able to throw little light—Hume returned to England with the manuscript of his greatest work, "The Treatise of Human Nature." There followed four years of writing in Scotland—the "Philosophical Essays," the "Essays Moral and Political," the "Enquiry concerning Morals," and the first draft of the posthumously printed "Dialogues concerning Natural Religion" —the books which brought Hume the recognition he desired. It was through this period that Hume's interests moved definitely from epistemological problems to those political and economic questions which soon led him to the writing of history. In his histories, the great modern nominalist, who had (in the "Treatise" and in one of its Appendixes) adumbrated the contemporary notion that universals are not identities but ranges of differents, exhibited his worst deficiency as an empiricist. "He lacked an eye for individuals. He was happy only when he could reduce the individuals to types." It is this blindness to individuality, and to process as a factor in the data of experience, that must be cured if Hume's position is to be rendered adequate as a philosophy.

Hume's last seven years were spent rather lazily in Edinburgh, first in his old house in James's Court, finally in the new house he built in what was to be called St. David's Street. He projected further historical writing, but more than half-heartedly. He revised his "History of England" so as to eliminate "the plaguy prejudices of Whiggism," his "Essays," so as to stress the evils rather than the advantages of a free press. But at the same time that he grew more and more the Tory, he became more and more an enthusiast for "total and final" revolt in the American Colonies and the East Indies. But, on the whole, he felt "he had done his work, and could now take his ease. The science to which he determined to devote his remaining years was cookery. He had collected many recipes in France." He dined his friends in fine style. Boswell "records an elegant supper at Mr. Hume's with 'three sorts of ice creams.'" Loyal to his old servant, Peggy Irvine, who declined to "fash her heid" with all the new foreign dishes, Hume himself taught her a few of his favorites. "A pleasant vision—the illustrious, but rather fat, Mr. Hume, standing in a hot kitchen, recipe in hand, while the faithful, but a little surly Mistress Peggy learned a new and better method of producing sheep's head broth."

Professor Greig's writing is fresh and direct and well-seasoned with expressive Scotticisms. He has packed nearly every page with observations of the special wit and brilliance which are the peculiar charm of eighteenth century letters and memoirs. If the book has a fault as a literary work, it is that that great number of persons, introduced because of some slight commerce with Hume, but not developed as individuals, sometimes distract attention from the chief figures. But those who read the book out of interest in Hume rather than in literary biography, will not be willing to spare a single one of these incidental encounters.

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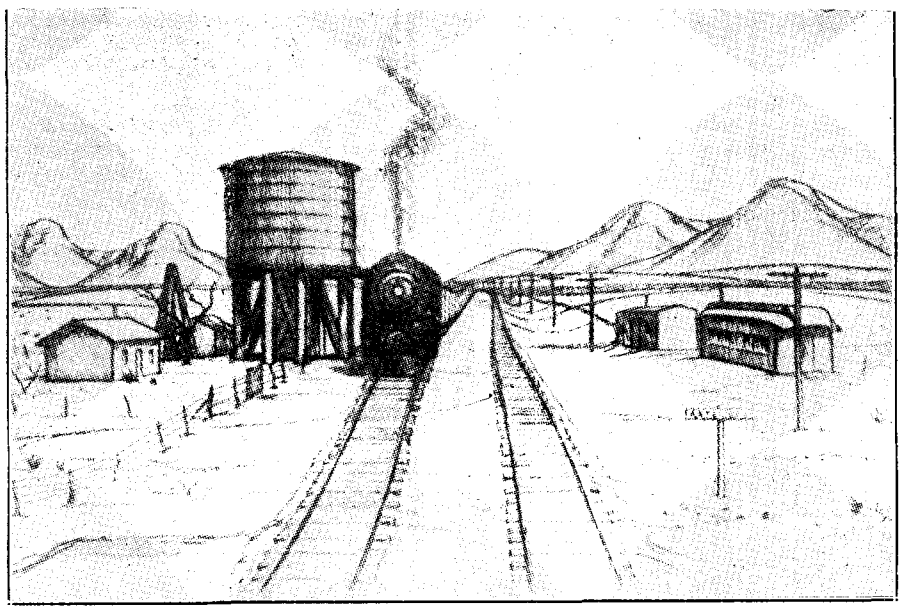
The 1932 James Tait Black Memorial Book Prizes have been won by Helen Simpson's "Boomerang" and Stephen Gwynn's "The Life of Mary Kingsley." These prizes are awarded for the best novel and the best biography of the year in the opinion of the Professor of English Literature at Glasgow University.



THE SIDING, BY ANDREW R. BUTLER.
From "Contemporary American Prints" (American Art Dealers Association).

# *Colossus of Roads*

E. H. HARRIMAN, THE LITTLE GIANT OF WALL STREET. By H. J. Eckenrode and P. W. Edmunds. New York: Greenberg. 1933. $2.50.

Reviewed by John Chamberlain

THE sort of biography which H. J. Eckenrode and P. W. Edmunds have written of E. H. Harriman is a trifle touching these days when *The New Yorker* features drawings announcing baseball games at Sing Sing: "Trusties versus Wall Street." No doubt a little of the scarcely unrestrained eulogy of the style is justified. For Harriman was no Jay Gould, bent solely on validating the Marxian dictum that, under capitalism, "surplus value" becomes the one aim of mankind. Panics, Black Fridays, depressions, were good growing weather for the little, restless, unkempt man who represented "Myself," but he was a builder as well as a manipulator of the market.

If Harriman had lived in the 'twenties, and had turned his energies to whatever industrial developments there remained for the individualist to exploit (say, the electric power industry), he would most certainly have occupied a niche beside that reserved for Henry Ford in the spiritual Red Square of the Communists, who occasionally look like Capitalists turned inside out. A Five Year Plan would have attracted Harriman. He would have leaped at the chance to put the Turksib rail system on its feet—or, rather, its wheels. In fact, he was reaching out for the South Manchurian Railway, in grandiose hopes of belting the globe by way of Siberia, years before the name of Stalin was known to the Western world. He made the Union Pacific, long the "bedraggled slut" of thimbleriggers, a smooth-running road. He built the Lucin cut-off across the Salt Lake. He "rationalized" the Southern Pacific. He tamed the Colorado River when it threatened to inundate the Imperial Valley. He reached out to seize the domain of James J. Hill in the Northwest, only to be mulcted of his hold by the Northern Securities Supreme Court decision which forcibly exchanged some of his Northern Pacific stock for Great Northern shares which he did not want, but which eventually sold for a vast profit.

In short, Harriman was less of an "undesirable citizen" than some capitalists who enjoyed the ear, the favor, and the praise of Theodore Roosevelt. He had an organizing passion which would have demanded outlet in any world, that of Adam Smith, Stuart Chase, or Nicolai Lenin. But it is difficult to see just why Messrs. Eckenrode and Edmunds have written their book in the vein of the late Clarence W. Barron's notes. The public, suffering under the harrow of depression, will scarcely flock to the bookstalls to buy uncritical stuff about "little giants of Wall Street." In 1922, George Kennan published a two-volume biography of Harriman which contains the facts of the Eckenrode-Edmunds book. The tone of the two biographies is similar. For those who like their Alger stories readable, flashy, and unburdened with too much detail of stock manipulation and road grading, there is Garet Garrett's curious novel, "The Driver," which presents a slightly distorted picture of Harriman's career. Messrs. Eckenrode and Edmunds do not write fiction, but their foreshortening of the Kennan book lifts Harriman out of his social context. He is made to appear unique, the "last individualist." Samuel Insull and Henry Ford might object to this characterization. In any event, the time for the sort of book produced by Eckenrode and Edmunds has passed. What we need now is a book showing why the Harrimans grew in their time and place, and why the time for them is gone by. An E. H. Harriman and an Interstate Commerce Commission are mutually exclusive. And will any reader of LaFollette's "Autobiography" say that an Interstate Commerce Commission was not inevitable?

# *Economics and Art*

(*Continued from first page*)

because they are aristocratic.* What they and what our Western critics, do not understand is that these economic novelists —and one might include here a range of writers entirely outside the communist influence, such novelists as Sinclair Lewis, Pearl Buck, H. G. Wells, the Austrian Werfel, John Galsworthy, and a host whose interest is drawn to the effects of economic environment—what they do not understand is that these novelists are not really interested in theories at all, but only swept away by our present concern with economics.

The literary imagination is particularly susceptible to currents of emotional thinking. It was swept into whirlpools by Jacobinism; it is swept into eddies by our almost religious obsession with economics. Look at the young American writers who have so whole-heartedly gone communist. Is it communism they are interested in? The Communist party does not seem to think so, nor do they seem interested in adapting their theories to the realism of American conditions. The truth is that they have been unsettled, as critics and artists, by the powerful currents of thinking setting toward economic problems, and have swung toward communism as to an island of positive, logical dogma in a sea of confusion. (Some of their contemporaries are taking to Catholicism for the same reason.) They are not phenomena of communism. They are examples of what happens to the detached literary mind when its world suddenly drops its every day eating, loving, working, and becomes absorbed in ideas.

Turn over the pages of any newspaper, or of what used to be called the literary magazines, or look at the book lists of the publishers. You will see the results of our economic earthquake everywhere. It is a good time for speculation in facts and ideas, a bad time for literature. Belles lettres of high quality that is not propaganda, not protest or investigation, has been scarce for two years now. The public is not much interested in literature as such—neither it might be said are the writers. They are flustered, and their books are flustered. If we had a Tennyson, a Fielding, a Jane Austen, a Thackeray, a Hawthorne, or an Emerson, they would have to wait till the storm is past.

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* But see a letter upon Soviet literature by Lydia Nadejena, to be published in the *Review* probably next week.

## *BOOKS IN THE NEWS*

THE Nazis have evidently been taking lessons from the late Hamilton Wright Mabie, whose famous "white list" of proper books was long the pet object of H. L. Mencken's derision in this country. Not content with preparing a list of "questionable" books for the public bonfire—a list that includes most of Thomas Mann's works, Remarque's "All Quiet," books by Barbusse, Schnitzler, Feuchtwanger, Arnold Zweig's "The Case of Sergeant Grischa"—a literary housecleaning board is busy drawing up a "white list" headed by Adolf Hitler's own best-seller, "My Struggle." This "white list" comes under the heading of "errors of commission."

Under "errors of omission," pardonable in the circumstances, comes H. R. Knickerbocker's evident decision to refrain from publishing his recent *New York Evening Post* articles on German Fascist tactics in book form. Farrar & Rinehart had set the articles in type, and were about to issue them under the title of "The Jews in Germany," when publication was suddenly stopped. Evidently Mr. Knickerbocker, about whose personal bravery there can be no question, found himself in a tragic dilemma: to publish and possibly to lose his value as a source of news for his newspaper, or to desist and retain his contacts.

* *

The German P. E. N. club reports that stories of atrocities visited upon Jews by the Nazis have been greatly exaggerated. But the protestation is not convincing. German P.E.N. stationery has an ominous look: the names of Alfred Kerr, Herwarth Walden, Hans Martin Elster, and Theodor Daubler have suddenly been crossed off the letter-head. The German group has been "harmonized" by the election of an all-Nazi board of directors. On May 25, the world P.E.N. (poets, editors, and novelists) meets at Dubrovnik in Jugoslavia. In the light of the principles of the English and American P.E.N. groups — that "literature, though national in origin, knows no frontiers, national or political" —the Germans will be watched with interest.

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The *Saturday Review* has made two important additions to its staff, Mr. George Stevens and Mr. John Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain, who comes in as assistant editor, has held for some years a like position on the staff of the *New York Times Book Review*. He is the author of "Farewell to Reform," which was widely reviewed upon its publication last year, and has been mentioned for the Pulitzer Prize. He is a graduate of Yale in the class of 1925 where he was an editor of *The Yale Literary Magazine*, and has been writing regularly for *The Nation, The New Republic*, and other magazines, specializing particularly in economics and politics but reviewing also fiction. Mr. Stevens, who joins the business organization of the *Review*, has been vice-president and director of W. W. Norton & Company, and has been also associated with Doubleday, Doran and with Alfred Knopf. His experience in editorial work, in advertising, and publicity has been extensive. He is a graduate of Harvard 1923.

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# The Bowling Green

## Notes With a Yellow Pen

II.

IN Chicago, that last week-end in February (24th to 27th) there was a queer feeling of suspended animation. People were waiting—they scarcely knew for what. Waiting for spring after a bad winter; waiting for the new Administration only a week away; waiting for Beer; for the World's Fair; for news of the banking situation in Michigan; waiting to see if Mayor Cermak could possibly win his long fight for life. NEW BLOOD FOR CERMAK said one of the many newspaper extras. One had a subconscious feeling that Long Distance telephone calls were ringing everywhere. The basement coffee-shop at the Palmer House, where Colatine and I had breakfast after a night on the Nickel Plate, was busy with coffee and toast and cheerful waitresses, but men's faces were solemn over the morning papers.

What a grim town it is when one gets away from the bravado front of Michigan Avenue. Those dark alleys toward the downtown railway stations are very sinister. The financial caverns of La Salle Street, always dour, looked even more sombre than usual. Maryland had followed Michigan with a fiscal freeze-up, and there were unhandsome rumors from the Senate committee investigating banking ethics. The story current in Chicago that week-end was that things were so promiscuous a white woman had married a banker. But not even the shadowy abyss of La Salle Street gave such an impression of gloom as Mr. Insull's empty opera house. Even the movies seemed to have abandoned it. The Blackstone Hotel was closed. The school teachers were still unpaid. But behind these perplexities Chicago's mercurial spirit was moving. Lyon and Healy's music window was full of "William H. Woodin's latest waltz hit, *Spring Is in My Heart Again*," and his F. D. *Roosevelt March*. Marshall Field and Company were taking advantage of the lull to redecorate the store against the Century of Progress exposition. The first touch of Western alacrity that always pleases my ear is the voice of Room Service at the hotel. When you say—perhaps ordering coffee, or White Rock, "Will you send that up right away?" the Western answer is always, "You bet I *will*."

A Chicago lady of means who had lost everything except her Rolls Royce found herself an office job. Her chauffeur, who could not find any other work, was staying with her just for board and lodging. He drives her to her office every morning. The car was halted by chance alongside an Unemployed rally. Some roughnecks began shouting indignation at her handsome car. She saw the back of Charles's neck redden with anger. She opened the window and retorted to the crowd. "Shut up, you damn fools," she cried, "this car keeps the driver working and it's cheaper to ride in than a taxi."

All circulation of money seemed to be mysteriously clogged. I stopped in one big store to buy some undershirts; my twenty-eight cents change got stuck in the pneumatic tube. The apparatus gave a deep, wistful, gasping sigh (like the husbands of Charge Accounts) and expired. I had to wait for a Floor Manager and all sorts of autographed vouchers before the surplus could be reciprocated. In that same store, I heard, all employees were to go on commission, instead of salary, from March 1st. That was what happened to Pinneberg in *Little Man What Now?* that fine German novel of which you will be hearing more very soon. But the Chicago elevator girls seemed to me even more beautiful than ever. Or was it just that the department-store elevators were empty enough so that one could see them better?

In gray times Chicago turns eagerly toward midnight amusement. Miss Texas Guinan, who is a shrewder forecaster of public morale than many financiers, had just opened a new cabaret in expectation of the World's Fair traffic. A carload of those little wooden hammers had arrived for her customers to pound enthusiasm on the tables. They were doing so. The dance floor was crowded. That Saturday evening Colatine and I had been to a demonstration of the Lie Detector (Northwestern University's famous machine for measuring veracity), so we were presumably sensitive to any kind of deception. We watched and listened to various manifestations of huzza without noting any insincerity. Those people were having fun and they didn't care who knew it. The dancing was so thick that collision was inevitable. One couple, bumped strongly in postern at an unstable moment, rolled deliciously on the floor. Their eyes looked upward with most humorous surprise and appeal, but no anger. They were like government bonds, begging not to be walked on. It was a good-humored mellay, and Miss Guinan presided with hoarse and genial bonhomie. But I could see that she regarded me as an old Hoboken showman rather than as a literary person, and I began to fear she might call on me for a speech. Making what we regarded as a legitimate professional deduction from the check, Colatine and I slipped away. After the uproar of the cabaret Colatine had a notion that the Dunes would be a pleasant peace. But it was late, a drizzling winter and the dunes were far. We did not go, but I was sorry. I've seen those famous sand hills only from the train, but I had a queer dream about them years ago. I dreamed—without any known reason for it—that Mr. Don Marquis and I were riding desperately in a taxi-cab, somewhere in the Loop and under the Chicago L. We were fleeing from some vast calamity, an earthquake or fire, and peering anxiously above to see if the L would collapse on us. Don kept saying, "If we can get out to the dunes it'll be all right."

I gave Tex Guinan's little wooden mallet to a travelling sociologist who was on his way to speak a series of lectures in Des Moines. He promised to use it as a gavel in case his meetings became unruly. "Ideas have a chance in Des Moines" was the slogan that vigorous city had adopted for its parliament of civics. I hoped there might be some pleasant symbolism in the idea of Miss Guinan's little mallet of merriment going to so serious a meeting. There should be more human hilarity in our learned conferences.

The Lie Detector, which our old friend Burt Massee was kind enough to have demonstrated for us, was very interesting. It takes a combined graph of the subject's respiration and blood pressure while he is being asked questions. The simplest form of demonstration is for the supposed felon to choose one of ten cards. The operator of the machine of course does not know which one has been chosen. Each card in turn is then held up before the chooser; he must deny them all. They may be exhibited to him in serial order, so that the subject knows when the guilty card is coming; or in random order so that it comes unexpectedly. The test is whether the operator can deduce, from the behavior of pulse and breath, which was the chosen card.

It is easy, of course, for the subject to control his respiration, but less possible (perhaps impossible?) to alter one's blood pressure at will. Among a group of people who were deliberately trying to fool the machine, its findings, in the hands of an experienced operator, seemed to me remarkably successful. I myself was elated to beat the machine on the first test, but it showed me up on the second. Where the subject gives himself away is usually the unconscious relaxation of blood pressure after he supposes the crucial question is past. Whether the record of the machine could ever be accepted as legal evidence I cannot surmise, but I have no doubt that intelligently used it might well help to verify a moot presumption. I was amused, about a year ago, by a newspaper story from Chicago about a young couple who were married with the Lie Detector recording their palpitations while the judge read the ceremony. According to the A. P. story at that time:

> The bride's heart—but not the bridegroom's—nearly stopped when the judge asked the bridegroom, "Do you take this woman?" and also, when he said, "I pronounce you man and wife."
>
> The bridegroom's blood pressure rapidly and steadily decreased during the ceremony, while the bride's steadily rose.

Except in the rental library departments, the book business was in that now familiar condition described as "very quiet." But friends in the trade were not taking it lying down. All seemed hopeful that spring, and Roosevelt, and beer, might mean improvement. Marshall Field's enormous book department has been enlarged yet again. At Carson Pirie's the book department is printing a lively little house-organ of its own, named (for the store's Scottish ancestry) *The Thistle Leaf*, to apprise its customers of the latest book news. The renting of jig-saw puzzles has been a useful help in all book departments—indeed that painful pastime has been so accurate a symbol of the whole economic world lately that historians may look back on 1932-33 as the Jig-Saw Age. —Ben Abramson of the Argus Bookshop had been amusing himself to print an enormous cut-rate circular in the size and style of a newspaper, celebrating his tenth anniversary. Mr. Kroch, the famous bookseller on Michigan Avenue, whose literary enthusiasm extends over many countries and languages, was alert with plans for his International Book Store at the World's Fair. For this he intends a catalogue whose first printing will be 100,000 copies. From a high terrace of the Tavern Club, where Mr. Krock took Colatine and me to lunch, we were surprised to see Admiral Byrd's polar ship lying moored under huge buildings in the green backwater of the Chicago River. Small and old-fashioned, waiting for the spring (to be towed down to the Fair Grounds), she also seemed an emblem of Trade.

CHICAGO RIVER.
From "All about Chicago" (Houghton Mifflin).

Thanks to Ben Abramson I had a chance to meet Chicago's two literary cops—detectives John Howe and Bill Drury of the gangster squad. They took me riding in a police car on their afternoon round, hunting for trouble. I had expected at least a vehicle with armored panels and bullet-proof glass; but no, just an ordinary stock sedan, quite indistinguishable from any other, with radio concealed in the roof. It was a clear Saturday afternoon—"a swell day for a getaway," remarked Bill Drury, explaining that this was a likely time for pay-roll bandits. "I thought you didn't have pay-rolls in Chicago any more," said the visitor uneasily. As Bill and John are well known to most Chicago torpedoes, there was an uncomfortable expectation of something coming through the window at any moment. Bill and John, sitting in the front seat, had two revolvers apiece and another—a very big one—lay close to hand on the floor of the car. Ben, sitting with me in the rear, regaled me with anecdotes of a recent occasion when one of this intrepid pair took several gunmen into camp single-handed. They are not assigned to any definite beat but cruise ad lib with hearts of controversy. Fortunately the general business syncope seemed to apply to crime also. The radio above us, which droned out messages now and then, did not report anything near enough or important enough for Bill and John to consider. "Car 173, Car 173," the voice would say, calling the particular police-car nearest the emergency, "1618 West 18th Street, 1618 West 18th Street, a man impersonating himself as a police officer." Or, "Car 152, Car 152, 5528 West Harrison Street, 5528 West Harrison Street, a reckless driver." I think Bill and John were just a little ashamed that so promising an afternoon turned up nothing sanguinary for the tenderfoot. When a call came through "Man in a restaurant leaves without paying his lunch" they feared I would think Chicago was going soft. We went out along the lake shore, and then diligently pursued all Chicago's more dangerous regions, but everywhere was complete calm. They showed me the old Desplaines Street police station, where (if I understood right) the friendly veteran in charge is a brother of Mick Collins, the Irish patriot. That forbidding old place, with its medieval-looking cells in the basement, was almost empty save for some pathetic old wastrels to whom the good-natured cops give charitable shelter. They have a warm room behind the cell-tier where harmless bums can wash their clothes and have bread and coffee.

Bill and John pointed out the garage where the Valentine's Day massacre took place a few years ago (there's a bookstore next door to it). One gang of racketeers stood a rival gang against the wall and mowed them down with machine guns. They showed the police monument in Union Park, site of the Haymarket riots, and many historic spots where either gangster or cop had taken it, but the bang of an unexpected blow-out (on another car) was the only nerve-shock. "You needn't jump," they said; "if one hits you, you probably won't hear it." These men, who have a record of unshaken coolness and valor, are great readers, especially of poetry; one of their good memories is of having taken John Drinkwater on the same tour. Among the many paradoxes of Chicago I know none more complete than to ride round the town looking for bullets while John and Bill, with eyes constantly watchful, talk about Robinson Jeffers and Edna Millay and John Masefield.

As John Howe was hanging up his smart brown overcoat at lunch, before we went riding, I noticed a hole in it, and thought he must have torn it on a nail. It wasn't a nail, but a bullet-hole, where he had fired from his pocket.

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS:—Curious musky and perfumed smell of the elevators in the old Congress Hotel, traditional stopping place of book salesmen in Chicago. . . . The tunnel from the Congress to the Auditorium Hotel; it runs under the street and is much used by bookmen, the meals at the other end being cheaper. . . . The romantic Balloon Room of the Congress is now the Joseph Urban Room. . . . Philip Guedalla, lecturing in the Middle West, looks the part better than most of us; with fur coat and cane. . . . Ben Abramson eases the pressure on a bookseller's feet with elastic-sided shoes. . . . The names of cars on the Colorado Limited: *Island Charm, Prairie Lawn, Lambeth, Marcus Daly*. . . . Howard Vincent O'Brien's little kennel in the Chicago *Daily News* office made me almost homesick for old newspaper days.

(*To be continued*)

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

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According to *John o'London's Weekly* a forest composed of trees presented by living authors is being built up on the estate of M. Lugné-Poë, the French actor-dramatist, near Avignon. Bernard Shaw has sent an oak tree, M. Maeterlinck two yew trees, and Gerhardt Hauptmann two pine trees.

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# HERE AND THERE ABOUT THE WORLD

## Sailors' Tales

BOWSPRIT ASHORE. By ALEXANDER H. BONE. With woodcuts by FREDA BONE and an introduction by H. M. TOMLINSON. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1933. $2.50.

Reviewed by ALFRED F. LOOMIS

H. M. TOMLINSON who writes the introduction to "Bowsprit Ashore," deplores the tendency of modern sailors to follow each long passage with a long book. He rakes the ad-writers for the steamship companies who in the earning of their daily bread wax lyric over far-off islands that they have never seen. He fulminates against the gadgets of modern steamships. By these gracious stages he works himself up to delivering the reader into the hands of a sailor "whose business, once on a time, took him around Cape Horn as though it were the mulberry bush."

Perhaps I should have read the introduction last—if at all. As it happened I was left in an antagonistic frame of mind (for steamship ads need not be read by the literati, and gadgets may appear romantic to a later generation, and young sailors sometimes spin grand tales) from which I did not wholly recover until I was half way through the book. There I encountered the ancient, land-ridden Scot to whom Bone, the traveler, recounts the highlights of each recent voyage to "furren" parts. I learned how eagerly the old man listened to each new tale of the sailors' life, and how painstakingly if mistakenly he rolled under his tongue such outlandish names as Guayaquil and Torre dell' Annunziata. And I realized that I, like the aged Scot, had become increasingly interested in the reminiscences of a sailor. Restored to enjoyment of the printed word, I read on with the soothed feeling that it was not printed but that the youngest of the literary Bones had chocked me off on the chart-room settee and was telling me. He told me of boarding masters, of loading rice at Calcutta, of the tragic death of a Chinese sailor whose mangled body was "interned" to the popping of firecrackers in scandalized Germany, of Mother Grant, the villainous crimp of Astoria, and of a score other persons and experiences that only a sailor could tell. He left me thanking him and stammering that I was honored to have made his acquaintance and that I hoped some day that I would be permitted to take somebody else up to the bridge to hear his reminiscences.

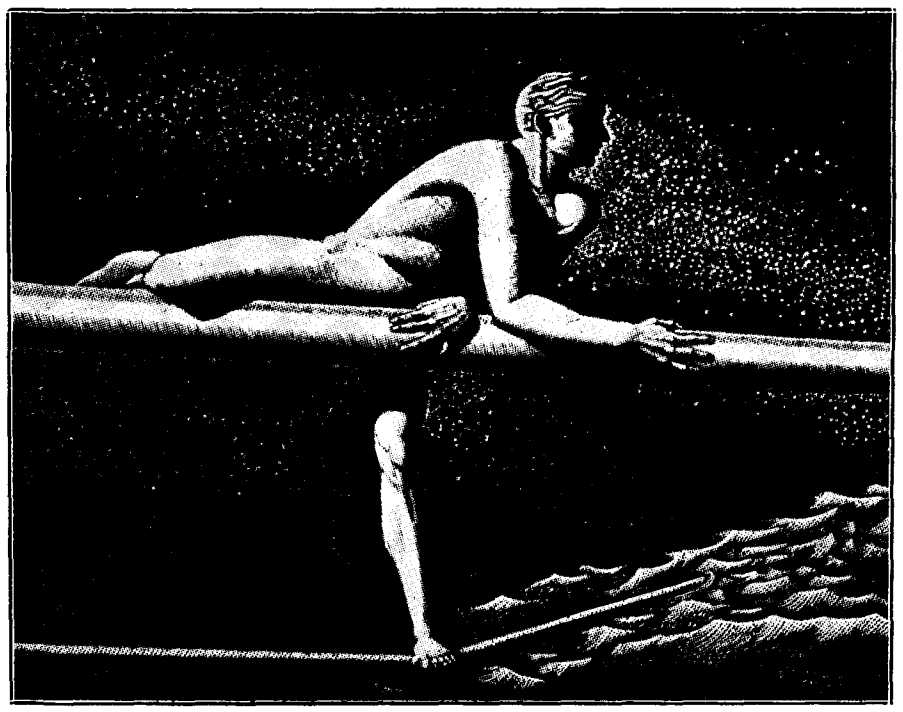
Fortunately, there is not as much formality in Mr. Bone's avocation as there is in his vocation. I do not have to ask permission to recommend his book. I may advise that with no other formality than the crossing of a bookseller's hand with silver many spirited, amusing, and entertaining tales of the sea and sailors will be found in "Bowsprit Ashore."

## Desert Crossroads

CARAVAN CITIES. By M. ROSTOVZEFF. Translated by D. and T. TALBOT RICE. New York: Oxford University Press. 1933. $4.50.

Reviewed by ARTHUR DARBY NOCK

WE have all in our time felt the thrill of Flecker's picture of the merchants riding forth at evening from the wells, and most of us have wondered how through the centuries East and West exchanged their products across the desert. This brilliant book gives some fascinating chapters from the story. It opens with a brief but illuminating sketch of trade from early days, which reveals a surprising vigor and complexity of commercial life, and proceeds to a more detailed consideration of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Professor Rostovtzeff shows how large a part the desire to control and develop these highways of business played in the determination of statecraft, and how clearly their fortunes can be traced in the growth and decay of four cities, Petra, Jerash, Palmyra, and Dura. He gives a vivid account of the extant remains of each of these, and illustrates it by a series of good photographs, many of which are due to the skill of his wife.



THE BOWSPRIT, BY ROCKWELL KENT.
From "Contemporary American Prints" (American Art Dealers Association).

There must be few, if any, who can read this book without finding their historical perspective greatly changed. It makes us see the issues between Ptolemies and Seleucids as turning not merely on prestige and "the flag stuck on a heap of bones" but on the domination of the vital arteries of commerce. We see the key position of semi-independent Petra, as later of semi-independent Palmyra. We see the effects of the varied fortunes of Judaism in the decay of Greek city life in Transjordania at the time of the Maccabee success and in its expansion after the fall of Jerusalem. There is something suggestive of the rise of the Hansa league in the rise of the semi-independent states just mentioned from financial power to political power. The desert routes produced peculiar political conditions. They created also religious phenomena of a special kind. The world of the Semite of the desert, as for the Semite of Mesopotamia, derived its character from the antithesis of the city or oasis and the sand—the small inhabited area protected by its gods and laws and the intervening spaces tenanted by evil spirits.

The spade has brought this world back to life. Dura, from which much of the most important material is drawn, was a mere name till 1920. Now it is difficult to imagine how any idea of the interplay of Greek and Oriental culture in the Euphrates was ever drawn without what we have learned from this site. The excavations begun by M. Cumont and continued by Yale under the direction of Professor Rostovtzeff have been fruitful as few others in the annals of archæology, and it is sincerely to be hoped that the stringency of the moment will not involve any suspension of this vital work.

"Caravan Cities" cannot be too highly commended to the attention of the general public and of specialists alike. It is written in a most lucid and interesting manner, with no unnecessary technicalities and nowhere reads like a translation. One wish may be expressed for the new edition which it should surely soon reach, and that is that a larger map including the coast of Arabia and giving the ancient and modern place names should be supplied on a folder at the end instead of the inadequate on the second page.

## Is Paradise Enow?

HAWAII AND ITS RACE PROBLEM. By WILLIAM ATHERTON DUPUY. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office. 1933. $1.

THE conclusion of Mr. DuPuy in regard to Hawaii's race problem is that there isn't any problem—at least in the sense in which the phrase is generally used by continental newspapers. As Mr. DuPuy was executive assistant to Secretary of Interior Wilbur and made his investigation after the unfortunate notoriety which came to the islands a year or two ago, his view may be accepted as more or less official.

The ultimate American in Hawaii, he suggests, will probably be "about one-third Japanese, one-fifth Filipino, one-tenth Hawaiian, one-twelfth Chinese, one-fifteenth 'Anglo-Saxon,' with a sprinkling of Korean, Puerto Rican, and what not. He will be about as swarthy as a Sicilian, straight-haired, stocky, physically fit, industrious, efficient, athletic, vain, dressy, given to gambling. His women will be known around the world for a peculiar beauty found nowhere else."

Although the professional Nordics may gnash their tusks at this prospect, Mr. DuPuy regards it with optimistic equanimity. Careful examinations made by specialists at the University of Hawaii refute, he says, the old theory that unions of unlike races produce inferior individuals. He gives all sorts of interesting examples both of the extraordinary aptitude of the various peasant stocks for American education and of the successful merging of the representatives of different stocks in the general scheme of things. It all sounds like the Garden of Eden.

## An Excellent Handbook

THE BIRDS OF MINNESOTA. By THOMAS S. ROBERTS. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1932.

Reviewed by SAMUEL SCOVILLE, JR.

IN my boyhood days bird books were rare as ivory-billed woodpeckers. Young birdists were nourished on John Burroughs's "Wake Robin," Cone's ponderous "Key to the Birds of North America," or Langille's "Our Birds and their Haunts," a fascinating book even to this day. A favored few had access to the plates of Audubon and Wilson but we of the common herd had to depend upon descriptions or woodcuts.

Now comes a two volume edition of the "Birds of Minnesota," prepared by Dr. Thomas S. Roberts, Professor of Ornithology at the University of Minnesota, and illustrated with ninety-two color plates by Major Allan Brooks, George Miksch Sutton, Walter Aloise Weber, Frances Lee Jaques, and Walter John Breckenridge, including one plate of the bobwhite—his last—by the late Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Besides these color plates there are no less than two hundred and ninety-eight text illustrations, showing the habitat, nests, and eggs of different birds. No one but a field ornithologist can realize what an enormous amount of time and patience is required to secure such photographs as the one showing the sandhill crane—that wariest of birds—on her nest or a pileated woodpecker at her nesting-hole, or a sapsucker caught in the act of killing a mountain ash.

It is interesting to compare the technique and methods of the different illustrators, all of whose work is reproduced in color. Breckenridge's page of plovers with the golden, the black-bellied, piping, semi-palmated, and killdeer, is an exquisite bit of work. Jaques is spectacular in his pictures of the extinct whooping crane, the sandhill, and the great-blue heron, while Weber's page of grouse chicks is revealing as a study in detail.

With the small birds, Major Brooks is easily the leader of the quintet. His frontispiece in the second volume of a family of ruby-throated humming-birds feeding, quite appropriately from blossoms of the jewel-weed, is one of the most exquisite bird paintings which have ever appeared. Not even Fuertes, the old master, can surpass the Major's method. Besides a photographic attention to the smallest detail, there is a life in the pose which makes his birds seem about to fly out from the page.

It seems invidious to make any criticisms of such illustrations and the only one that this reviewer will venture is in regard to certain titles, where either the artists or the editor had a bad spell, "juvenile" appearing as "juvenal" in several places.

Outside of the illustrations, which are easily the best which have ever appeared in any American book on birds, the letter-press is packed with a wealth of information and interesting detail, the results not only of Dr. Robert's own extensive observations, but culled from the notes of a long line of scientists and observers. The abridged bibliography of Minnesota ornithology which is part of the last volume, covers some fifty pages and includes several hundred titles, from the "Voyages of Peter Esprit Rodisson from 1632 to 1684" to Chapman's "Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America, Second Revised Edition, 1932."

Dr. Robert's masterpiece contains a number of birds of the Middle West rarely seen in our Eastern States, such as the Arkansas king-bird, Clark's nutcracker, Townsend's solitaire, Bell's vireo, Kirtland's warbler, the palm warbler, the yellow-headed blackbird, Brewers blackbird, besides a wealth of Western sparrows, such as Baird's, Leconte's, Nelson's and the dickcissel, lark-bunting, and lark-sparrow. In fact, armed with a pair of good bird-glasses and "Birds of Minnesota" an observer can cover this country almost to the Pacific slope without finding any undescribed or unpictured bird.

Ornithology now awaits "Birds of the North" and "Birds of the Southwest" to complete a library of books on birds, which will cover all of the United States, outside of its territorial possessions. Speed the day when either or both of these books appear.

In the meantime, "Birds of Minnesota" is the best book on birds for both amateur observers and scientific ornithologists which has appeared in America.

## Since Armageddon

EUROPE SINCE THE WAR. By J. HAMPDEN JACKSON. With a Special Introduction by the Author for the American Edition. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1933. $1.25.

THIS book is almost a model of its kind. It is impartial, understanding, and extraordinarily brilliant in its selection of significant detail. One usually suspects authors who claim complete objectivity, or publishers who claim this virtue for their authors, but Mr. Jackson's primer of European history since Versailles almost convinces one that an utterly "above the battle" book can be written. The author's forte is sympathetic exposition. When he is writing about the achievements of the February or October Russian revolutions, it might be the voice of Trotsky speaking. The discussion of Fascism, on the other hand, is all that a Mussolini sympathizer could wish. Mr. Jackson presents facts in the light of aims. Most astounding is his encompassing of the French point of view as well as the German; mutually exclusive attitudes are subsumed in Mr. Jackson's book under a larger synthesis that has thoroughly explored and ingested the whole. This would make Mr. Jackson a bad politician, of course, but "Europe Since the War" is the winner thereby.

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# Points of View

Letters discussing reviews are welcomed, but those limited to 200 words will be favored for publication.

### *Page a Superman*

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

Sir: Carl Van Doren and Lewis Gannett don't know anything about Czechoslovakia. My friend George Rebec of the University of Oregon does, because he is a Czech. So he spots all of Hank Van Loon's Czechoslovakian errors which Van Doren and Gannett didn't detect. Should Rebec, therefore, be the man to review Van Loon's Geography? But suppose Van Loon is also all wrong on Bolivia and Sumatra. Would Rebec know that? Who should review books, the literary chaps who can appreciate the style but probably aren't qualified to pass on the facts—or the scholars who know the facts but probably aren't much impressed by the style?

It was Ellsworth Huntington, wasn't it, who reviewed Van Loon's book for the *Saturday Review,* and I remember that he, as a scientific geographer, was irritated because Van Loon had ignored all the new geography, hadn't taken the trouble to study up on it, had merely dressed up old-fashioned geography with sprightly drawings and an irreverent style. So if Huntington is right, you are wrong in your editorial in which you say that Van Loon has popularized the findings of modern geographers.

WEBB WALDRON.

Westport, Conn.

### *Chills and Fever*

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

Sir: In his review of James Gould Cozzen's "The Last Adam" Alvah C. Bessie seems to have found the trouble with many of the younger American writers who possess technique, highly specialized information, and the ability to tell a tale: they do not know how to move the reader. That is direct and penetrating criticism. But I can not help wondering how many of those who have read Fred Rotherwell's "A Preface to Death" (which Mr. Bessie includes in his list of polished novels that leave the reader cold) will agree with the critic in question in regard to that specific book. No novel that I have read written by an American and published in 1932 stirred me to the extent that his book did.

JACOB H. LOWREY.

Augusta, Ga.

### *These Evil English*

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

Sir: We westerners out here in the literary Styx who are trying to absorb culture by reading the *Saturday Review of Literature* are becoming somewhat bored over the lavish praises of foreign authors, especially English. I have looked patiently for a word of adverse criticism of anything English. Priestley's "Faraway," so fulsomely praised, I consider bordering on cheap melodrama. Now of course we know full well that if it were not for good old standardized America, these novelists of England would not be half so busy nor half so successful, at least financially. I dare say that the activity they manifest would be much lessened if they depended on home consumption and never had access to the American market for their literary wares.

CLARENCE MILLIGAN.

Detroit, Mich.

### *Riling Riley*

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

Sir: This is a quite detached remonstrance on Woodbridge Riley's review of John Dittemore's biography of Mary Baker Eddy. It does seem to me that a magazine of critical comment could very well afford to give a biography of one who is bound to arouse sharp feeling to someone who could regard it temperately—certainly not to a Christian Scientist, but not to one whose feelings prevent his regarding a particular book with detachment. I should say that Professor Riley was not a very calm man.

Some feel that Mr. Dittemore was motivated by a desire for power in the days of his association with the Christian Science Church and some feel that he was persecuted; some feel that Mrs. Eddy was a great woman and some do not. I should think it would be well to assign so controversial book as this one to a person who can see both sides of a question. If Christian Science was simply an obscure cult there might be a slight difference, but considering there is not a city or town in this country without a Christian Science church or society it would seem to merit a little more thoughtful treatment.

HENRIETTE HENTLE.

New York City.

### *The Fountain Runs Dry*

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

Sir: "The Fountain" again! This reader feels that, although "The Fountain" may easily rank with the best modern books in its fluency and peacefulness (it ranks almost alone in the latter!), it is by no means an important book. I stayed with it three quarters of the way to the end and then gave it up, for the following reasons:

It is thin. It offers neither a complete nor a convincing justification of the contemplative life, even to one with a serious weakness for that life, for it does not tell what is worth contemplating. The only modern chord in it is the admittedly pleasing immorality. (But that is also old.) It has no social implications of value. The "philosophy" is so amateurish that it would alienate any neophyte from entering upon seclusive contemplation. Many authors say, "Oh, *that* idea—that's what the *character* thought, not I." But we won't be fooled. Whenever an author's philosophy-in-fiction is good, he wants to take the credit for it to himself; and when it is bad, he blames it on his puppets.

G. J. W.

Mountain Lakes, N. J.

### *A Perfect "South Wind"*

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

Sir: To my mind no adequately illustrated edition of "South Wind" has yet been published. D'Angelo's illustrations were too bizarre; John Austen's were entirely unsuited to the text, as I knew they would be (I am an admirer of John Austen's work) when I read the announcement of his proposed edition; and Miss Petrina's look entirely too wishy-washy, and actually mar the text by their irregularity.

As a matter of fact I believe that "South Wind" is one of those books which should never be published in an illustrated edition, although it should be printed in the best format a skilled typographer can devise—say one by Dwiggins. Moreover the format should be of such a size as to permit, without muscle fatigue, easy and frequent reading. I would like to see it appear in a volume similar to those comprising the Limited Editions Club edition of Balzac's "Droll Stories."

GILBERT H. DOANE.

Lincoln, Neb.

### *The Superlative Parade*

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

Sir: For weeks I had been containing my wrath with greater and greater difficulty. Violet Hunt's "The Wife of Rossetti" having appeared with advance praise from England, the New York critics had begun to outdo each other in superlatives,—dishonest as ever in being "to the conqueror's banner true—," over one of the most meretricious pieces of misrepresentation that ever appeared under the guise of biography. As a student and lover of Rossetti, I was overwhelmed in reading the book to find perversions of fact on almost every page. The critics' language was strained for eulogy; they found scholarship (though there isn't a reliable documentation in the book), sympathy, penetration. Even your Mr. Benét recommended it.

At last came the truth I awaited. You had the courage to print Miss Winwar's straight-from-the-shoulder review, putting the miserable fictionizing in its right place,—the sensation novel. You are, and especially she is, to be congratulated for the candor of scholarship.

But we are left with the horrible reflection of how mightily our book-reviewers fail us in our reliance upon them. Authorities in every field, how can they be expected to know anything about any field? What we need is the solid accomplishment of knowledge such as Miss Winwar demonstrates.

LEONARD BOTAL.

New York.

# The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received.

## Fiction

KETTLE. By GUSTAV ECKSTEIN. Harpers. 1933. $2.50.

Dr. Eckstein's two preceding books—his admirably understanding biography of the biologist, Noguchi, and his fascinating volume of "Lives"—suggested that he had in him the making of a novelist. Now this venture into fiction confirms that belief, at least in large part. It exhibits one—and the most important—qualification of a novelist; the ability to portray character "in the round," with sympathetic, subtle understanding. His people stand out clearly; vivid, animated figures, truthful portraits. If the book as a whole lacks something of the novelist's craft in its construction, it is none the less a fine piece of work of quite unusual interest. There are plenty of writers capable of making conventionally good novels, but few who have the warmth and intellectual fervor of conviction of this book.

One might almost say that the hero, the true protagonist of this, is Music (one needs the capital) itself—not as a mere abstraction but as, somehow, a living entity above and beyond its concrete manifestations. In some sense, Vladimir Munck, the human centre of the book, embodies this conception, but he is no vague personification of an idea; he is a human, flesh and blood being. Furthermore, Dr. Eckstein has a definite thesis—expounded and carried through to a Q. E. D.—the danger of institutionalism in the arts.

Munck is a pianist and composer who is swept into the organization of a vast Lyceum in New York. The bulk of the book describes the smothering processes of such an institution, and the petty jealousies and conflicts that arise.

Several women come in intimate contact with Munck, but the resultant relationships remain somewhat vague. It is here that the book is rather shadowy, as a novel, though each person is presented with understanding. The chief interest remains that of music itself. Obviously, the fable is open to more or less concrete application.

GAS-HOUSE McGINTY. By JAMES T. FARRELL. Vanguard. 1933. $2.50.

In his first novel, Farrell showed talent for—among other things—dialogue that is convincing and effective. This ability to write good dialogue is demonstrated again in "Gas-House McGinty," where dialogue is used almost without the aid of description. The book is something of a *tour de force,* interspersing ordinary dialogue with what might be called collective dialogue — the disjointed conversations, shouts, exclamations, telephone conversations, etc., of an office full of men. The method is a bit annoying at times, when the speakers are not carefully differentiated, but on the whole it is remarkably effective.

McGinty is, at the opening of the story, chief wagon dispatcher for the Continental Express Co., Chicago. Before the end, he is demoted to dispatcher, and another man takes his place. The story is essentially one of defeat and frustration, but these elements are not insisted upon. Rather, we are given a series of vivid and vigorous impressions, which are left almost entirely to our own interpretation.

Farrell does not soften the coarseness of the men's conversation in the office, and he does not avoid expressions that are ugly and obscene. The immediate impact of his book is strong; it also leaves us with something for reflection.

THE YEARS OF LOVE. By MARGARET WIDDEMER. Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. $2.

Genuine old-fashioned romance is something one can grow very tired of, unless it is presented with the light touch, the spring-like variety, and the unfeigned zest that Margaret Widdemer, for instance and particularly, gives it. "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose," said Grandmother Warner to the very modern Lila of 1933. "The effects and dresses . . . change about one eevry five years." And all the marriages in the Warner family had been romantic, even the marriage of old Miss Lallie, the spinster who never grew up. Spiced with humor and a dash of social history, they made good stories.

Grandmother Warner's idea is that woman's place is the home, and she is very persuasive about it. Working girls who secretly desire to be convinced of this, who surreptitiously feel that a typewriter is inherently no more exciting than a dishmop, especially when one has to use them both, should by all means read this book. It does not shun the wildest melodrama, nor does it neglect the appeal to the feminine imagination by careful description of costumes, decorations, and amusements.

This, of course, is the charm of a period piece, that melodrama is more easily credible and that the appointments are a necessary part of the story. Miss Widdemer evokes her past days by references to things frequently remembered or read of, and gives her heroines liveliness by contrasting them with the fad-ridden majority of their times. Unusual, almost to the point of eccentricity by the standards of their times, all these girls are, and the things that happen to them are unusual by any standards. What, dear reader, was the secret of the golden curl that Great-grandfather Barr carried till his death? Not what you think, at any rate. Who was Chryssie's Prince Charming? Was there really a ghost at the Love-Gate? But trust Grandmother Warner: they all married, and lived happily ever after.

THE MEN OF NESS. By ERIC LINKLATER. Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. $2.50.

Mr. Linklater has first of all told a roaring tale, and told it with commendable terseness and a hard and pithy brevity that make the wild adventures and incredible visitations from the dead as real as a state of mind. He has told this tale of the Orkney Islands in the ninth century as an Icelandic skald would have told it; he has revived an old conventional form and cast his story in its mold. So far as I know he had had no one original but has borrowed here and there, taken stories and incidents where he found them. and added to them. He is the first to realize the vitality of this form and make use of it.

There have been authors enough who were fascinated by the great body of fiction of the North and have translated or revised translations to a romantic model nearer their heart's desire, or nearer to what they thought the public would stomach. Both translations and revisions, however, have had one of two fatal flaws that have kept them hidden from all save enthusiasts: they have been either too smoothly literary, or so archaic in diction that the average man needed a glossary to detect the full meaning. In neither version could the full vitality or the full reality of these ancient stories strike the reader with the force that they should. Mr. Linklater's saga reads like a contemporary story. The reader becomes a participator in the action—the responsibility of judgment and imagination is given him again. He will find a wild world where dead kings reclaim their property, where revenge is a sacred duty, a world where men are ruthless but die nobly. And the story of that disastrous sea voyage should cling to him for days—and nights.

THE SINNER (YOSHE KALB). By I. J. SINGER. Translated by MAURICE SAMUEL. Liveright. 1933. $2.50.

Many readers will be familiar with the subject of this novel from the excellent play, "Yoshe Kalb," made from it and presented by Maurice Schwartz. But one must go to the novel for the picture in its completeness; an extraordinarily brilliant portrayal of the life of the Chassidic Jews of Poland and Russia. The Chassidim (Saints) are modern sectaries, dating from about 1750, as a revival of the ancient Assidæans who opposed Hellenistic innovations in the third century B. C., but they are essentially medieval Puritans, with an addiction to thaumaturgy. It would be difficult to find any people more of an anachronism in this twentieth century. Yet they have furnished the background for a considerable segment of today's American population.

The central figure of the piece is Nahum, a young Rabbi, a mystic and ascetic, engrossed in the lore of the Kabbala, who is dragged from his study to be married at the age of fourteen. He pines in the alien environment of his father-in-law's Rabbinic court—a vast, complex establishment, important as a business concern as well as a religious centre—until the advent of Malkah, the sixteen-year-old

(*Continued on next page*)

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BY

NORMAN DOUGLAS

AUTHOR OF "SOUTH WIND"

LOOKING BACK

An Autobiographical Excursion

The celebrated author of "South Wind" has at some time or other known almost everyone who has touched the life of literary Europe since the eighties. His memoirs review his own many-sided and unconventional career, creating again a whole gallery of personalities—D. H. Lawrence, Rupert Brooke, and Frank Harris, to mention but a few—and painting a portrait of himself that is sharp and lively as any he has created.

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BUT unfortunately for him the day his book was published the national bank holiday began. The public had neither the inclination to read reviews nor available cash for the purchase of books—not even for one so exceptional as this.

SO the publishers, confident of this book, certain of its author's importance and of his future, knowing that many who missed this book would thoroughly enjoy it, want those missing readers to read

UNION SQUARE

by Albert Halper

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# *The New Books*
## *Fiction*

(*Continued from preceding page*)

bride of old Rabbi Melech, Nahum's father-in-law, disturbs his seclusion. She is a vivid young rebel. Nahum "sins" with her; she dies in childbirth and Nahum sets forth, as a beggar, upon a life of penitential wanderings, under the burden of sin. This sense of sin is the central theme, the chief *leitmotif* of the book. It is worked out dramatically with great power and subtle insight.

The translation, so far as one can judge without comparison with the original, is exceptionally good in that it rarely gives the reader any feeling that it is a translation.

POINT TO POINT. By M. J. FARRELL. Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. $2.

Partly in the romantic tradition of Byrne—and the humorous one of Somerville & Ross — Miss Farrell presents a worthy successor to her "Young Entry," and more recent "Mad Puppetstown." The peculiar enchantment of the Irish scene so vividly set down, the charm and raciness of so irresponsible a way of living, the natural picturesqueness of people and speech so nicely revealed, combine to make this story of the sporting gentry a novel of distinction.

Beauty sometimes courses headlong through its pages. So long as there's a horse or hound left in Ireland (and it will take more than a dictator or Free State to uproot fox hunting and racing there), and rich and poor alike may indulge their love of a gamble,—just so long the attraction and authenticity of such a tale will not fade. The book is without a truly defined plot. Yet the reader is content that it should be so, since that modicum of happenings is so engaging. While the narrator, Captain Pulleyns, at the invitation of old Sir Richard visits his Irish cousins at Pullinstown, all manner of sports are lightly included, from the hunting and racing of our ancestors to salmon fishing and even a little love-making. One fairly tingles to the excitement of the game. The back-chat and the immortal patter of the horse copers and the joys of a horse trade steeped in ancient etiquette; Irish roguery and love of conspiring, local color in the race-going crowds, and the easy familiarity of old servant James with his master and young overlords; the vivid account of the stirring point-to-point race,—the roving pattern of the story permits of countless anecdotes and sketches of all these things.

What the book lacks in shading and interpretation of character is compensated for by an ability to make the moving pageant of a fox hunt live in the imagination of the uninitiated and be reborn in the minds of the experienced. Where the writing seems instinctive, it is best, otherwise it verges on the "literary." Like the new beer this is light lager fiction, not for the taste of those who prefer a headier variety.

SHE LOVES ME. By NORMAN KLEIN. Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. $2.

Mr. Klein, whose first novel, "No! No! The Woman!" called attention to him as a newcomer of promise, has done a good piece of work in this more ambitious tale. It is of interest primarily as a series of well-related character studies of the youth of today, especially in the case of the heroine whose growth from girlhood to matronly maturity is the backbone of the book. All of the young people, including the rather weak second husband of the heroine, are drawn with intelligent insight and completeness. One is not so sure as to the success of the picture of the enigmatic middle-aged Claude. He is a striking conception, but he remains somewhat sketchy.

The story opens in Mexico and progresses through Hollywood and Los Angeles to New York.

### *ART*

*Making a Water Colour.* G. P. Ennis. Studio. $3.50. *Line Drawing for Reproduction.* Ashley. Studio. $2.50. *Early Steamships.* (Currier & Ives Prints.) F. Riesenberg. Studio. $2. *Metropolitan Museum Studies.* Vol. IV. Part II. Metrop. Museum. $4. *George Washington in Sculpture.* F. D. Whittemore. Marshall Jones. $3.50.

### *BELLES LETTRES*

*Challenging Essays in Modern Thought.* Ed. J. M. Bachelor and R. M. Henry. Cent. $2. *The Mind of Poe and Other Studies.* K. Campbell. Harv. Univ. Pr. $2.50.

### *BIOGRAPHY*

*Lawrence and Brett.* D. Brett. Lip. $3. *The Desert Island Adventure Book.* Ed. J. Grove. Macmil. $1.90. *Twelve American Ports before 1900.* R. Brenner. Harc., Bra. $2.50. *Essays in Biography.* J. M. Keynes. Harc., Bra. $2.50. *Looking Back.* N. Douglas. Harc., Bra. $3.50. *Prince Charlie.* C. Mackenzie. Appl. $1.50.

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*Alien Corn.* S. Howard. Scrib. $2. *Twelve Famous Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century.* Mod. Lib. $1.

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*History of Foreign Policy of the United States.* R. L. Jones. Put. $3.50.

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### *PAMPHLETS*

*Spinoza: The Man and His Thought.* Ed. E. L. Schaub. Open Court. 75 cents. *Farewell Worry.* J. Brent. Morehouse. 35 cents.

### *POETRY*

*The Queen of Seven Swords.* G. K. Chesterton. Sheed & Ward. $1. *Summer Goes On.* L. Lee. Scrib. $1.75. *Glory of Earth.* A. W. Scruggs. Oglethorpe Univ. Pr. $4. *Poems* B. Dewey. Ripperger. 125 West 16 St., New York. $2.50. *Arcady and Other Poems.* A. Price. Pearsall Printing Corp. 150 Lafayette Street, New York. *Sunward.* T. Sweeney. Put. $2.50.

### *TRAVEL*

*Impressions of South America.* A. Siegfried. Harc., Bra. $2. *All about Chicago.* J. M. R. Ashenhurst. Hought. Mif. $1.

# *The Criminal Record*

***The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction***

| *Title and Author* | *Crime, Place, Sleuth* | *Summing Up* | *Verdict* |
|---|---|---|---|
| FOOL'S GOLD<br>*Stanley Hart Page*<br>(Knopf: $2.) | Two implausible prospectors murdered while in New York to finance gold mine. Christopher Hand solves it. | Characterization childish; deduction gratuitous and amateurish; plot incredible; style pretentious but unfortunately illiterate. | No. |
| BULLDOG DRUMMOND STRIKES BACK<br>*H. C. McNeile*<br>(Crime Club: $2.) | Government official murdered; Drummond & Standish won't play with Scotland Yard; result, 91 more (unnecessary) murders. | One of those incredible international plots, plus a fool heroine; but Drummond's adventures are worth it. | Good of its kind. |
| THE GOLF HOUSE MURDER<br>*Herbert Adams*<br>(Lippincott: $2.) | Strange will cutting off beloved foster daughter and odd murder of witness to testament puzzle "Yard" and young barrister. | Takes so long to get started that speedy latter chapters lose zest, and criminals are obvious from beginning. | Oh my! |
| THE BANK VAULT MYSTERY<br>*L. F. Booth*<br>(Dodd, Mead: $2). | Looted vault; old man walled up in concrete pillar; New York "gentleman" detective. | Robbery motive hinging on impulse of amateur criminal and tangled lives of ordinary citizens. Sleuthing adequate. | Good |
| THE EEL PIE MURDER<br>*John Rhode*<br>(Farrar: $2). | Swift-living young divorcee found dead on islet in Thames and Inspector Bull is called in. | Plodding work with infinitesimal clues plus humorous touches of tale interesting. First class puzzler. | Good |
| TIGER STANDISH<br>*Sydney Horler*<br>(Crime Club: $2). | Noble lord, also football (British style) star, succors distressed lady and breaks up criminal gang. | Bad melodrama. | Hard labor |

GOOD READING

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# *The Reader's Guide*

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

**Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*. As for reasons of space ninety percent of the inquiries cannot be answered in print, a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.**

THERE is one kind of book in whose selection I am so seldom consulted that I have scarcely the face to take review copies, and am forced to carry two lending library subscriptions to keep up my own supply. This is detective stories. Not that the supporters of this column are above this type of entertainment. Let it but mention a mystery and I get instant and informed responses. But these addicts have a way of finding their own favorites. Watch one before the bookcase of the local drug store when the new lot of mysteries has just come in (he has read all the old ones). See his eye brighten (he has caught the word Inspector or Scotland Yard), or his brows contract (he has spotted somebody whose name ends in *sky*). Back, at the latter warning, goes the volume. Down comes, instead, something by somebody who has suited him before—for in the matter of favorite authors he is grateful as an elephant. It may be Bush or Berkeley, Freeman, Fletcher or S. S. Van Dine; your crime fan is above all faithful to his own ideals and knows what he wants. He knows so well that he often resents advice. A purist of the Crofts method, see him sheer off from Suggestions of Oppenheim or Beeding. Believing in the rigor of the game, he will spurn the strong-arm methods of gangster novels. In short, he gives the bookshop less trouble than any other type of customer, and the lending library more patronage.

But now there has come within a reasonably short time, from a reading circle in the East a large arc of which is formed by teachers, a library further West, and a private citizen right here in New York, calls for my personal selection among the new detective stories. These calls have but one requirement: the books should give money's worth. They should last beyond the moment of let-down bound to come in the best detective story, the moment when you find out who did kill the Duchess. If the let-down comes before this point, the book was awful and many are. But if you still keep some sense of gratitude to the author after the suspense is over, if you can even look back and read some bit of the book again before somebody borrows it away forever—for borrowed detective stories are never returned—and that is an honor and no mistake.

Such is Dorothy Sayers's "Murder Must Advertise" (Harcourt, Brace). I think I never enjoyed a detective story so much —probably because it takes place in a large advertising agency and what goes on there in the everyday run of business is so steadily and even so uproariously funny it would keep me reading even a mystery less double-end-twisted than this. Only this new setting—in which Lord Peter Wimsey sets in motion a grand new coupon-system—puts it ahead of the otherwise peerless "Strange Case of Dr. Earle" (Dodd, Mead), by Freeman Wills Crofts, my personal favorite, whose masterpiece it undoubtedly is. You are not sure till late in the day that anyone is really murdered at all, until Inspector French, having pulled almost every thread in sight, gets hold of the one unraveling everything. It will be seen that my own preference is for detection rather than crime; when I want that I like to take it straight, in the works of Edmund Pearson or William Roughead. But in fiction a large class of readers, of which I am one, loves above all a square-toed solid man from the Yard patiently plodding up the wrong alley until a flash of intuition shows him at last the right one.

Anything that Kay Strahan does in this line is good, and there will be many who will call her new "The Meriwether Mystery" her best. It is a Crime Club offering, and nothing from this organization is offered to me in vain: look out especially for G. D. and Margaret Cole's "Death of a Star" and Philip Macdonald's "Death on my Left," good, big ones with plenty of live people besides the dead ones. Henry Wade is another favorite whose best is his latest: "The Hanging Captain" (Harcourt, Brace). Along with this selection for the top drawer I would put one "The Brownsville Murders," by B. S. Kierstead and D. F. Campbell (Macmillan), for its freshness of plot and treatment and for the unusual Canadian setting.

It means something to let a newcomer into the inner group of literary sleuths, for certain writers have taken their obligations so seriously and stood so well by their following that anything with one of their names on the cover will be confidently taken home. My own trust has been well rewarded by "Dr. Priestley Lays a Trap" by John Rhode (Dodd, Mead), a fine one for motorists as it takes place midway of a thousand-mile "motor-car rally"; by Christopher Bush's "Case of the April Fools" (Morrow); and by "Genius in Murder," by E. R. Punshon (Houghton Mifflin), for whom I formed a wholesome respect on account of "The Cottage Murder."

"Those Seven Alibis," by Charles G. Booth (Morrow), ticks off that number of people who could have done for an antique dealer in San Francisco—and a man whose murder is so fondly desired by so many makes a good subject, not straining to the sympathies. "In Time for Murder," by W. J. Walling (Morrow), begins with a bang and keeps its big surprise to the very last, something that amateurs try to do but only old stagers seem to manage properly to bring off. I am looking forward with confidence to Nancy Barr Mavity's "The Fate of Janet McKenzie" (Crime Club). Another writer for whom an audience is lined up expectant is "Ellery Queen" whose "American Gun Mystery (Stokes) will be on the stands by the time this is in print: a typical Ellery Queen should coincide with a mild case of flu to get its best effect, for it calls for a good alibi from work for at least two days. Everyone knows that the latest Van Dine is "The Kennel Murder Case" (Scribner): but if Mr. Wright should be looking for a title that would sweep the country I suggest "The Philo Vance Murder Case."

One feature of spending the summer in England is that one gets a head start on some of the best Fall crime; thus in the midst of a hot spell unparalleled in England last year my mind was taken clean off the weather by two novels, each with an unusual situation, a picturesque setting, and a cumulative interest: "The Murderer of Sleep," by Milward Kennedy (Kinsey) and "Darkness at Pemberley," by T. H. White (Century). Now they are out in this country and I hope delighting others as they did me.

Two American thrillers attracted me by the vitality of their setting, "Hell Gate Tides," by Lee Thayer (Sears) and "Murder at Endor," by William Almon Woolf (Minton, Balch), the latter so up-to-date that it takes the Bonus Army to get the falsely-suspected hero out of a snarl.

Of the newcomers I have my eye especially upon Frank Chase, who suddenly started up as a sleuth after a blameless career publishing, and in only his second novel, "Danger in the Dark" (Dodd, Mead), shows that he really has the right Promethean fire—or in the case of murder should it be Satanic? "The Case of the Velvet Claws," by Erle Stanley Gardner (Morrow), shows another writer worth watching, and so does "The Saltmarsh Murders," by Gladys Mitchell (Macrae-Smith). "The Crime in the Crystal," by Robert Hare (Longmans, Green), has a situation so unusual that I must not even mention it.

For family use among fans nothing is more disrupting than one of these omnibuses, of which we have this Spring no less than five of the first rank. I know one family in which Marie Belloc-Lowndes's "Novels of Mystery (Longmans, Green; three in a volume) was rudely carried off by whichever one got it first, as a cat retires growling with a morsel for personal consumption. "The Celebrated Cases of Charlie Chan," by Earl Derr Biggers (Bobbs-Merrill) has five volumes in one; "The Fletcher Omnibus" (Knopf) has five; the "Crime Book" of Mary Roberts Rinehart (Farrar & Rinehart) makes a record for combination of length and low price, and the "Father Brown Omnibus" of Gilbert K. Chesterton (Dodd, Mead) with four volumes in one, includes so many separate stories of distinguished merit that it makes a little library of its own. Any of these would be of permanent value in a public library; indeed, in all these books named there is something lasting at least over some time. In none of them is there an undue insistence upon harrowing details of producing death or of getting confessions.

(*Continued on next page*)


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# The Amen Corner

*Brekekekex co-ax, co-ax!*

A recent notorious first personal appearance on the American scene almost coincided with the quieter appearance of a volume dedicated

TO MY OLD FRIEND
G. B. S.
LOVER OF IDEAS AND HATER OF CRUELTY
WHO HAS FILLED MANY LANDS WITH LAUGHTER
AND
WHOSE COURAGE HAS NEVER FAILED.

The volume is *Aristophanes: A Study*, by Gilbert Murray, published by the Oxford University Press.[1]

"In times like these," writes Mr. Murray, "one often longs for the return to earth of one of the great laughing philosophers of the past. . . . But for many years I have wished quite particularly for Aristophanes, and wondered whether, like the great men who rise from the dead in two of his own comedies, he could bring us later generations much help. Could he fight against our European war-fevers and nationalisms as he fought against those of his own country, facing unpopularity—facing death, if it must be—yet always ready with his gallant laughter and never collapsing into spitefulness or mere self-pity? He might do it, if only the Fascisti and Nazis and Ogpus could refrain from killing him, and the British authorities from forbidding him to land in England."

"Gilbert Murray," says the *New York Times*—which counsels the reader to "read this brilliant and revolutionizing study from end to end"—"is to be applauded for bringing Aristophanes out of the dust of libraries so that the least scholarly may shake the old fellow by the hand and make his rich acquaintance."

Gilbert Murray's acquaintance we do not need to make; The Oxford Press publishes, besides the invaluable "omnibus" volume of *Ten Greek Plays*[2] (which contains two by Aristophanes) translated by Mr. Murray and others (he has done seven out of the ten), a uniform cheap series[3] of his celebrated verse translations of the great Greek tragedies.

And while we're on the subject of translations, we dipped again the other night into "the most interesting translation of the world's most interesting book" (*New York Herald Tribune*)—none other, of course, than Shaw (Lawrence)'s *The Odyssey of Homer*[4]—and we read Book after Book before we were able to bring ourselves to extinguish the midnight oil.

A reviewer in this month's *Catholic World* says: "I have felt during it as Victor Hugo said he did while reading Homer—ten feet tall. If I were Keats I might attempt a sonnet. This better deserves one than Chapman's Homer."

THE OXONIAN.

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# Reader's Guide

(*Continued from preceding page*)

*N. M., La Salle, Colorado, asks if anything has been published about Mark Twain since* 1931. *She knows the books by Clara Clemens and Stephen Leacock.* These are the most important of recent years: "Mark Twain," by Stephen Leacock (Appleton), is a brief and sympathetic biography, rather of the author than of the citizen. "My Father, Mark Twain," by Clara Gabrilovitch (Harper), is another addition to the personal memories collection gathered around him. In Grace King's "Memories of a Southern Woman of Letters" (Macmillan) there are many glimpses of Mark Twain and his family in Europe and some in this country; one gets, for instance, Susy's protest after a ball in Berlin where she had received no attention save as the daughter of Mark Twain: "How I hate that name! I should like never to hear it again! My father should not be satisfied with it! He should not be known by it! He should show himself the great writer that he is, not merely a funny man. Funny! That's all the people see in him—a maker of funny speeches!" Dear, dear. William R. Gillis, in "Gold Rush Days with Mark Twain" (Boni), is not so nice: he knew Samuel Clemens when he was a newspaper man, and the book is useful for its light on the newspaper life of the time and place.

*O. M., Tipton, Iowa,* who started the readers of this department on gathering for him references to famous swimmers in literature, says that though he had kept a weather eye out for this subject for many years, the letters published in the Guide directed him to more matter on the subject that he had collected before. He asks if anything more has come in. I suppose I could add the "Water Stunts Chart" (Scholastic Coach Bookshop, 155 West 44th Street, New York, fifty cents), for it is the first time I have seen pictures with every detail of the principal water feats, even to "shadow swimming" and "waltzing," with directions, printed on a bright orange cardboard placard to be hung on the outside of a bathhouse or beside a swimming-tank. E. F. W. says: "Apropos of "Brush Up Your French,' have you yet recommended (I think it deserves it) 'Nouveau Lexique, a Dictionary of French of Today,' by H. N. Adair, Senior French master at Strand School, London (Scribner's, $2.50)? *Comme il est bon!* How good it is! (I referred to Adair before I tackled that.)"

*A. G., New York, asks for the best collection of modern short stories for a student's use.* It depends upon whether one is studying in order to develop appreciation of the best in his art-form, or in order to produce salable merchandise. The latter is an honest and increasingly prevalent intention: it will be well and honorably fed upon Thomas H. Uzzell's "Short Story Hits; 1932: an Interpretative Anthology" (Harcourt, Brace), which gives four selections from all-fiction magazines, nine from big-circulation magazines, and ten from literary magazines, with critical notes, suggestions for students and additional lists of stories it would be well for them to mark and note. It seems to me the most practical for its purpose of the many collections meant to help the student find his public and write for it. But if one is looking for a collection of stories with a reasonably good hope of living for a fairly long time, a collection bringing together some of the best of the type the first book puts into its third part, "Twentieth Century Short Stories," edited by Sylvia Chatfield Bates (Houghton Mifflin), is the one for him. Nineteen American writers are represented with a story each, six British and five in translation from the Continent; one is tempted continually to cheer at the felicity of choice. One feature both books have in common; they are uncommonly good entertainment for the general reader, apart from their value to the student-writer. If the second suits me better, it is because not being a writer with a manuscript to market, I am concerned rather with the future of this form of expression than with its immedate fashions.

*The Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Public Library* has been asked for novels showing the dialect of (1) the Pennsylvania miner, (2) the farmer of that state, (3) the fishing, (4) oil, and (5) manufacturing sections of Pennsylvania. This is for a forthcoming bibliography of dialect novels. They relay the request to me, and I promptly turn it over to readers quick to detect differences of speech.

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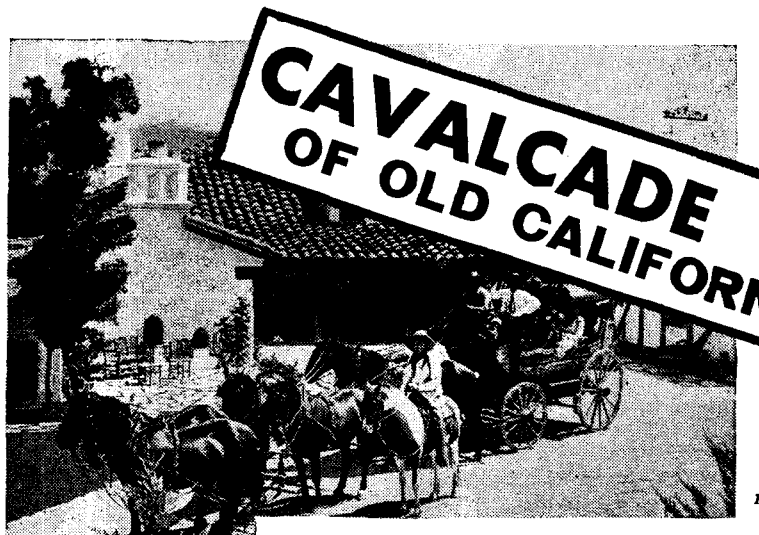


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# *Trade Winds*

By P. E. G. QUERCUS

POOR old Quercus, coming back from a handsome holiday (without pay), was determined to take life as easy as possible. ☞Then the first thing he saw was a sign at Broadway and 70th, DRIVE YOURSELF. ☞He refuses to do so. ☞His great book, if ever written, will be *The Memoirs of a Lazy Man* (in 2 volumes). ☞That fascinating window, *olim* Pinet's, on Fifth Ave., just above S. Thomas's, is still vacant. Wouldn't Mr. Clark T. Chambers, renting agent, like to put a copy of the *Saturday Review* (and a new book) in there each week, just for bait? ☞Speaking of Attractive Display, Mr. Louis Greenfield, peripatetic promotioneer for this paper, has invented a new and improved form of the *Saturday Review* display rack. ☞It not only stands erect, but can also (if more convenient) be hung leftways, rightways, or vertical. ☞As every bookseller or librarian remembers, it carries also one current book in tempting display, costs but One Dollar, is seemly gilt and is known as the Gold Standard. ☞Write to Mr. Louis Greenfield, applaud and congratulate this ingenious achievement. ☞A bookseller rambling on Madison Avenue was startled to see a fellow offering (with loud hollo) "Literary Guild selections, only 15 cents a copy." ☞Pearsall Smith's ever-delightful *Trivia* is once more in print (Doubleday), and those booksellers who know how this book makes friends are pleased. ☞A publisher lately returned from Russia reports that Mme Litvinoff is reading *Tristram Shandy*. ☞Old Quercus, devotee of detective stories, enjoyed Q. Patrick's *Murder at Cambridge* (England). Old Quercus also knows his Cambridge, but wondered at the author saying that Chaucer had once lived there. ☞Is this a new bit of Chaucer information? ☞Norman Douglas's memoir *Looking Back* is built on a very ingenious scheme: a rummage of old calling-cards found in a bronze urn. ☞Always nuts about anthologies, Old Quercus hankers to see *Reading at Random* which Ben Ray Redman has compiled for the Oxford Press's minuscule series of World's Classics.

☞Old Quercus got back just in time to admire the spring costumes of The Mermaids, who are busy doing the really hard work of the office. ☞Startled to realize that it will soon approach the beginning of its TENTH BIG YEAR, the *Saturday Review* is full of aspiration. ☞This is the sign of the zodiac known as *Taurus* or *Bull;* people born just now are notoriously difficult; ease their pangs with a subscription to the *S. R.* as a birthday present. ☞3½ fiscal mermaids, uninflated. ☞Poor Old Quercus was relieved to find that No One missed him while he was away ☞They didn't know he was gone.

☞The American Booksellers' Convention will be a one-day stand this year, meeting at Hotel Montclair in New York June 5. Out-of-town booksellers can take advantage of week-end railroad fares. The short session eliminates irrelevancies, impragmatisms, and still (hopes Old Quescus) leaves time for a little fun. A Wailing Wall of papier maché will be put up for Publishers' salesmen and the Advertising Solicitors' Union.

☞Old Fraternal Quercus extends a long arm across 45th Street to shake hands with Frank Magel, who recently acquired a controlling interest in Putnam's Bookstore. Ever since Mr. Magel left the Syndicate Trading Co. to become manager of Putnam's, we have periodically had occasion to notice a traffic jam in front of the store window. The latest idea was a live magician doing his stuff, surrounded by a carton of Camels and a display of books on magic—from some of which Camels got the ideas on It's Fun to Be Fooled. We don't know whether the window sold more cigarettes than books, or whether they just sold the magician.

☞The chain selling idea, which started with fountain pens, has now worked up to books. The Modern Library, through an affiliate organization, is trying it out. You sell Modern Library Books in groups of two; with your fourth customer you begin to get a commission on each sale, plus commissions on the first three sales of your fourth, fifth, and nth customers, and so on until the population (or someone) is exhausted. Just explaining it will exhaust most of them. The Modern Library is also working on a plan to put a shelf of their books in summer hotels throughout New England; distribution by means of Sarah Ball's perambulating bookstore. Quercus has composed a somewhat reminiscent verse in honor of the enterprise:

*Said Sarah Ball to Eric Small,*
*"Have you sold any books at all?"*

☞The best Trade Ejaculation uttered in a long while is Harriet Ashbrook's postcard in behalf of Coward-McCann: *Don't let the florists grab all the business on May 14, Mother's Day,* she says. *There are many mothers who can read, as well as smell flowers and eat candy.* ☞We are stronger for M. Herriot than ever after noting that he quoted Walt Whitman in his farewell statement to the American press. ☞The two Bobs (Hunt and Buckner) announce *A Barrel of Fun,* ingenious successor to their *Cocktail Wheel.* It has two revolving disks explaining all the traditional snacks and sentiments which accompany Three-Point-Two—recipes, toasts, etc.—but Bob (son of Bottle) does not state the price of this agreeable gadget. ☞Newton, Kansas, has now literary associations. M. Lincoln Schuster, en route east from California, was there handed a telegram informing him that *Little Man, What Now?* had been chosen (for June) by the Book of the Month Club. ☞The previous record was held by a member of W. W. Norton & Co., who received a long-distance call while occupying a dentist's chair in Atlanta, bringing the news of the Club's selection of *Ultima Thule.*

☞Quercus, who can't take a subway ride without throwing his neck out of joint trying to see the titles of books carried by his fellow-passengers, has frequently noticed pictures of books appearing in advertisements for blankets, automobiles, and other unrelated merchandise; but never has a title been legible, which is an irritation. ☞Suggestion to Listerine Tooth Paste: Buy a book with that $3 you save. As for instance, *Your Money's Worth* ($1) and 100,000,000 *Guinea Pigs* ($2).

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THE TIMES Literary Supplement of London, England, would have one think that they "thundered" for the Truth. The Thunderer. When they are given proof that Edward DeVere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was "Shake-speare," they thunder as a rabbit does when seeking the nearest hole. When one wields the pin of truth, a big Bladder is as easily pricked as a little one. George Frisbee, San Francisco, California.

DESIGNED for Living: Cottage on left bank of Hudson; apple trees, violets, poet next door, versatile; loads of hay. Terms easy, very easy. Address Ripples.

YOUNG man, twenty-five, winding up a disgusting first two years in New York, would deeply appreciate the opportunity of going to work for somebody who speaks English. Is genial, and of a Chesterbellocian turn of mind. Box 147.

DO YOU need a housekeeper-companion or a nursing-companion? Little else I know thoroughly but housekeeping and nursing I do. My assets over and above these are music and Italian, but, alas, although I have D. D. before my surname, I have no alphabetical assortment following. Box 148.

AN OLD New England farmhouse offers you a summer in the country on the open ocean: blueberry pie, new peas, lobster; a wood fire; no radio. Rates: $18, $20. The Breakers, Vinalhaven, Maine.

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YOUNG, American Jewish girl, very intellectual, desires to make acquaintance of lonely man not over 30. Must be same religion. Address The Green Goddess.

MISS DUNN for $12 types play manuscripts or, if you prefer, novels or short stories ten cents per page, 2 carbon copies free. Phone mornings KIlpatrick 5-9329 *or else* Write the Woman: 600 East 164th St., New York.

FAMILY preferring Sea would rent house, Watertown, Conn., to someone preferring summer in open hilly country without rigors of discomfort. Box 566, Watertown, Conn.

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# The PHŒNIX NEST

A SPRING protest from *Alice Boorman Williamson*, our Washington correspondent, seems to us pertinent and amusing. But Mrs. Williamson makes one mistake, the common one of spelling "wistaria" with an "e," which we have corrected. The Oxford dictionary informs us, in addition, that the name comes from Wistar, the American anatomist— a fact we should doubtless have known before. So far as color goes, however, it seems to us that Mrs. Williamson's point is well taken.

WISTARIA AND RED BRICK

Why do they do it? I wish I knew. Every spring it has to be endured—cascades of beautiful, pale purple blossoms and delicate brown-green foliage, splashed against a background of dull red brick, or, worse still, bright red brick. This teeth-on-edge effect can not result from ignorance of the color of the future flower, for surely there is no one who does not know what he is getting when he plants a wistaria vine. It probably is not even a love of the combined colors; I can recall no man dressed in a suit of brick-red set off with a purple tie; nor have I ever seen a wistaria suit and a red tie, though, to be sure, the latter combination might occasionally happen. Few women, I think, would combine the two colors sartorially. Is it, then color-blindness, or merely don't-careness? At any rate it is a crime! If "crime" seems extreme, muse over the wistaria you have seen climbing over creamy-yellow colonial mansions, or the soft, neutral background of pebbledash, or houses painted white or gray. Then call to mind the red-and-purple dissonance, and I think you will cede my point. Ah, if we Washingtonians had a vote! I should bombard Congress with my views until they passed a law making it a penal offense to grow wistaria within fifty feet of red brick.

I know a man who is genial and kindly, a lover and grower of flowers. *He* permits scarlet tulips to nod directly in front of a hedge of azalea whose color is best described as Tyrian rose (see Hidgway's "Color Standards"), or what our grandmothers called magenta. I have scolded him again and again, but he says that he sees nothing wrong with the scheme! Some day I shall rise in my wrath and yank those tulips out by the roots. I may add that I hold no brief for magenta—which is still magenta even when called Tyrian rose. But this hedge is a wonderful thing. In the sunlight the blossoms have a shimmering overlay of blue, an indescribable something that dazzles the eye. And thousands of bees buzz over it: they do not mind the tulips' garishness, for we are told that they cannot discern red. I, however, am not a bee, though I may seem to be a busybody in more senses than one, and I do not believe that I can stand those tulips another year. Perhaps an appeal to the Fine Arts Commission would help. Or I might tack on a rider to the proposed Anti-Wistaria-Red-Brick Act!

We like the way *Ben Ray Redman* has recently composed an anthology, "Reading at Random," from that priceless series of books, "The World's Classics" of the Oxford Press. For the plan Redman has adhered to unswervingly is "no plan." Hooray! That was the inimitable charm of *Leigh Hunt's* collections, and you will have to go far to find a better than the now completely forgotten "A Book for a Corner," which was random indeed. We have always wished to put together an anthology of verse with no plan and no reason-for-being except that, ranging from lively to severe, the stuff should all be what vastly tickled our own peculiar taste. We hope Ray's book sells millions. We've had enough of culture seekers, those who read for social reasons, and people entirely without a literary palate. . . .

The day after the first American issue of *Story*, the short-story magazine newly imported to America, appeared on the newsstands, despite the closing down of the banks leaving people short of change, the issue was so quickly exhausted that copies had to be called in from out of town stands to take care of subscription orders, since the number will not be reprinted. The editors say that they themselves had to send out in a hurry and buy a copy off a neighborhood stand for reference in making up the next issue. Copies of the first European issue of *Story* now bring from fifteen to twenty-five dollars, depending on condition. . . .

A current exhibition open to the public without charge is that of The Book Clinic, from May 12th to May 27th inclusive. A selection of books designed by the members of the American Institute of Graphic Arts during 1932 will be shown at the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12th Street, this city. Each book will be analyzed by the designer in terms of the manufacturing problems involved. . . .

A last word. It now seems that *Francis Iles* himself reviewed "The Gold Falcon" in *Time and Tide*, and advised "the naturalist to stick to his otter." This points to *Williamson*, and also the fact that we can now produce a witness who saw him eating oysters at the Harvard Club and is emphatic in saying that *Robert Graves* has never been in this country. Also Faber & Faber, Williamson's publishers, brought out "The Gold Falcon" in London. Which would seem to be Q. E. D. So all the literary detectives may now take off their false whiskers and relax! Oh yes, the one who has clinched the matter is *Frederic Prokosch* of New Haven. . . .

Speaking of relaxing, to make guests relax after a bridge-game someone has now invented a game called "Kitty." We got a postal from the Kitty Card Game Company of Elizabeth, N. J., telling us so. . . .

*Frederick B. Maxham* informs us of a new Little Magazine, *The Windsor Quarterly*. You address him at Hartland Four Corners, Vermont, if you wish to know more about it. *Edward J. O'Brien, Albert Richard Wetjen*, and *Samuel Putnam* are slated as contributors, among others. . . .

*George Frisbee* writes anent turtles, that, to us, always interesting subject:

> Let's talk turtle. My old tough, the rowdy that ruled the pool, dug himself in way back last Fall. He declared a turtle moratorium. Last week he came up for air and immediately ran away. After friendly neighbors brought him back several times, we fastened him by a cord to the garden wall near the pool. Of all the plants near him our prize was a rare heliotrope. Turtle dear loved that little plant. He wound his string around it several times then started for parts unknown. In so doing, he stripped the heliotrope to nothing but a measly stalk. Our dogs, seeking that which was new, spotted the lonely stalk and by some quirk, or throwback, felt that they were in the Bois. Chemists might be interested to learn that the plant's predominant *odeur* is now "Heliotropine Ammoniated."

*Blast*, a Magazine of Short Stories, will be published once a month from 55 Mt. Hope Place, N. Y .C., by the well-known American poet, *William Carlos Williams;* also by *Fred R. Miller* and *Sam Sorkin*. It will express the proletarian spirit in American life. But its main concern will be good writing. The first issue is scheduled for the middle of May. . .

Last week we printed an Oklahoman poem which dealt with the dangers of the frontier. Well, here is another poem—this time a sonnet—from Oklahoma by *S. C Giesey*, to follow up with. We think it's darn good, too!

*R. I. P. (INDIAN TERRITORY)*

*Strange, mourning genii ranked across the sky,*
*From prairies derrick-sown the smoke-lines crawl;*
*And there are ebon shrouds writhing as high*
*Where, raw and growing, the new cities sprawl . . .*
*No minor litanies these fumes inscribe;*
*They are the last rites for the last frontier*
*Gone with the bison and the cheated tribe,*
*The buckskinned hunter, and the slaughtered deer.*
*Such palls have smothered buffalo-grass and oak,*
*And lights, not flowers, in their shadows bloom;*
*They are grim answers to the tepee-smoke,*
*The shielded outlaw campfire, and the plume*
*Blown out above the squatter's hut that broke*
*Into his dream's fulfilment and his doom.*

Wishing you all the flowers that bloom in the spring! . . .

THE PHŒNICIAN.


THEY BROUGHT THEIR WOMEN

"The diversity between the two cultures south and north of the Rio Grande is sharply discernible in the respective status of their women. The North American settlers brought their women. The *squaw man* was outcast . ." Muriel, on her way to Mexico, read that in her text book. "There," she said to her husband.

A month or so later, though, there was a dream in his eyes. "I was just thinking," he explained, "How pleasant it would be to live for a year or two with Jovita in an old pink house, with a garden, in Cuernavaca, and paint pictures of the Indians, and of Jovita and her children; and sit in the sun, and look at Popocatepetl and Sleeping Woman against the sky."

"Leonard Starrett, have you gone crazy?" said Muriel.

"A little," said Leonard, "A little. But not enough."

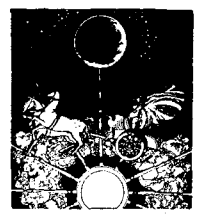
The people who settled the United States of America brought their women with them. In this, they were unique. All adventurers, all explorers, in all other parts of the world, did not. The title of Edna Ferber's new book of brilliant shorter fiction—her first volume since the memorable *Mother Knows Best*—is THEY BROUGHT THEIR WOMEN

Eight stories—each one a little novel. With eight individual jackets by René Clarke, printed on colored stock, and tipped into the book. $2.50 DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

THEY BROUGHT THEIR WOMEN

*by Edna Ferber*

HEY! TAXI!



Ernie drove a taxi. "Yeh, I see plenty, and hear plenty," he said. He was right.

WALL STREET—'28

Nine to five—a brief masterpiece of a certain phase of American life.

MEADOW LARK

Old man Trost used to shake his fist at the great transcontinental planes as they roared out of Wichita over his Kansas farm, but young Theo Trost followed them with yearning eyes, as other boys in other times have gazed at ships and trains. Then—

KEEP IT HOLY

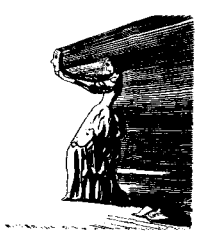
Sundays were the worst, they were so long. Evenings were bad, too, but they had an end. Sundays were just endless hours. That is, when you're alone in New York, as Linny was. Sunday—a day to be kept holy. There wasn't anything else to do . .

NO FOOLIN'

Young Georges, half French, used earnestly to tell his cousins in New York that America was the hope of the world, so young, so strong, so vital. "No foolin'," they'd say, and wise crack about the Depression. Georges took his mother back to France, and only his American grandfather knew why, and approved.

FRAULEIN

Mr. and Mrs. Carlton Shurtz wondered what Fraulein did on her day off. Probably sat and talked to some other *nursemaid, they* suggested. They little knew.



GLAMOUR

Linda Fayne, First Lady of our Theatre, was alwayscalled "glamorous." She hated the word, and one typical day of her life will tell you why.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